

Love You Forever And More Munsch

YPT Study Guide

Based on the stories by: Robert Munsch

Adapted by: Stephen Colella and Sue Miner

Directed by: Stephen Colella and Karen Gilodo

Introduction

This guide was written by Deanna Cervi and Emily Burns, with contributions from Jenni Saslove. As you scroll through the guide, you will find curriculum connections, discussion questions, units of study and more. If you wish to create your own lesson plan from the study guide copy, we have created a [lesson plan template](#) for your use. We hope you will find this guide to be a useful resource. Should you have any questions or feedback, or have inquiries about the use of this guide (which is copyright protected), please feel free to contact Karen Gilodo, Associate Artistic Director, Learning at kgilodo@youngpeoplestheatre.org.

About the Author

Robert Munsch was born on June 11, 1945, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A self-proclaimed under-achiever with a unique personality, Munsch began creating and sharing stories from a very young age, but never put pen to paper. It wasn't until he attended university to become an Early Childhood Educator that he would share his stories with the children he cared for, and was inspired to pursue writing professionally. He published his first book, "Mud Puddle", in 1979. Since then, he has based all of his stories and characters on the children that he had the privilege of meeting on his book tours and travels. His collection of nearly one hundred that have sold over 80 million copies in North America over the course of his 46-year-long career. Since being diagnosed with dementia in 2021, he has stopped creating new stories, but his published stories will continue to be enjoyed around the world – and he has indicated publicly that there are upwards of 50 more unpublished stories to be released after his passing.

Synopsis

Love You Forever And More Munsch is a play adaptation by Stephen Colella and Sue Miner, based on five stories by Robert Munsch: *Mortimer*, *The Paper Bag Princess*, *Murmel Murmel Murmel*, *Love You Forever*, and *Zoom*.

The play follows Mortimer, a little boy who doesn't like to go to bed. At bedtime, he decides to entertain himself by singing, "clang, clang, rattle-bing-bang!" which disturbs his mother and sister, and keeps everyone awake. As Mortimer's noisy imagination takes over, his mother and sister transform into characters from the four other Munsch books, and he finds himself tagging along.

Mortimer's sister becomes Elizabeth, the brave princess of *The Paper Bag Princess*, and Mortimer becomes her prince, Ronald. A roaring dragon destroys their castle and Elizabeth's clothes in a fiery breath, stealing Ronald away into the dragon's cave. Forced to wear a paper bag that she finds in the burnt rubble, Elizabeth must do what she can to save her prince from the dragon.

Mortimer's chant continues and he hears a strange noise coming from his toy box. Mortimer finds the baby from *Murmel, Murmel, Murmel!* Mortimer's quest to find someone to care for the baby leads him to various

characters, each of whom rejects the task. Finally, someone takes the baby in, and the story transitions into *Love You Forever*. Mortimer meets Mama and her daughter, and watches as the daughter grows up through Mama's eyes.

Finally, we meet Loretta, the protagonist of *Zoom*, as she rolls in on her slow wheelchair, complaining about its speed. Her mom agrees to take Loretta shopping for a new wheelchair and Loretta finds one with just the right "ZOOOOOOOM".

These stories are woven together to delight audiences both familiar with these Munsch stories or those who are new to them.

Thematic Overview

Each story in *Love You Forever And More Munsch* carries its own unique subject matter: *Mortimer* explores the boundless nature of imagination; *The Paperbag Princess* emphasizes independence and knowing what truly matters to you; *Murmel, Murmel, Murmel* is about embracing surprise and helping those in need; *Love You Forever* highlights the importance of cherishing one another; *Zoom* reminds us that anyone can achieve great things and that we all have our own unique strengths.

Despite these distinct concepts, there are various underlying themes that connect them all. First, imaginative play is at the core of each story. Through the use of imagination, the characters are able to explore new worlds, make new friends, solve problems, and have fun. This also encourages audiences to employ their own imagination to join the worlds with the characters. Second, the joy of humour is at the forefront of several of these stories. While the stories foster reflection and fruitful conversation, they are also silly and fantastical, thus reminding audiences the importance of laughter and joy. Lastly, the stories explore the concepts of family and home. Family might look different to each character, but they all learn the importance of understanding and caring for loved ones.

Ultimately, each story emphasizes how crucial it is that we support one another, build positive communities, and prioritize joy. By watching this play and completing the activities in this study guide, students will gain insight into how to foster these essential qualities.

Themes

Imaginative Play

The Joy of Humour

Family and Home

Curriculum Connections

The Arts – Drama

The Kindergarten Curriculum

Language

Health and Physical Education (Social-Emotional Learning Skills)

Ancestral Teachings/Gifts

Love

Respect

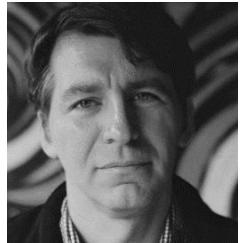
Interview with the Directors: Karen Gilodo and Stephen Colella



In addition to being the directors of Love You Forever and More Munsch, what are your full-time positions at YPT?

Karen: I'm the Associate Artistic Director, Learning.

Stephen: I am the Associate Artistic Director and Literary Manager.



Why did YPT choose Love You Forever and More Munsch as part of their 60th anniversary season?

S: As a 60th anniversary celebration, we were looking to bring back works from different times throughout YPT's history. The last time we did this show was in the mid 2000's, and we felt like it would be a really fun and joyful show to revisit.

What is one thing that you want students to know before coming to see the show?

K: Prepare to be surprised by what you see onstage. It may not look like it does in the book illustrations. It might be a different expression of a story that you know really well.

S: I find that when I read some of these stories with my son, if you try to change them at all, his response is, "that's not how the story goes!" So, while the show will include the stories we all know and love, there will be some slight differences. For example, you won't see the father in Mortimer. So, I think be open to the idea that in putting something onto the stage, it's going to be a bit different than how you read it in your book or see it in your head.

K: And that's part of the adaptation process. When you go from one medium to another, some things change, some things feel more real... so just prepare for some different interpretations and maybe thinking, "Oh I didn't think it was going to sound or look like that!" Then, consider what you think about those changes.

Can you talk about the themes of the play? Why are these themes important to young people?

K: We've talked a lot about the joyful and chaotic family life that people engage in.

S: I think everyone believes "only my family is this weird" and in actuality, every family is weird in their own particular way!

K: In terms of imaginative play, I love the idea of this story coming from Mortimer as a delay tactic to not go to bed – because when kids are having fun playing a particular game, they will change the rules of the game to extend the play. I think Mortimer is having so much fun with his imagination that he doesn't want to go to bed, and I think both children and parents will relate to that experience during bedtime.

When we talk about the joy of humour, I often lean into the sentimentality of the play, especially as a parent. Stephen, on the other hand, says the show has to be fun.

S: At this point in a kid's life, they want to and should enjoy these stories for their zaniness. Robert Munsch takes these real stories that he hears from children and grows them into something fantastic that still have truth at their core. I think it's important to recognize the fun in extending that reality but also what it means to revel in the joy of it.

What made you want to direct this show together?

K: Stephen and I both really love and appreciate any opportunities to be in the rehearsal hall, especially since our jobs are often focused on office work which we also enjoy. We've worked together for a very long time and we've done several creative projects together before.

I think we complement each other really well – we don't always think about things in the same way. It is fun that we can communicate really directly with each other. We're the same in terms of the kind of atmosphere that we want to create in the rehearsal hall. We really want it to feel collaborative, while still having a direction. We both also prioritize looking at the relationships between the characters and making sure that that comes out as clearly as possible.

S: I also think it's a challenge, in a good way, to direct with somebody else. Typically as a director, you're used to being able to sit in that chair and be the final decision-maker. In this case, sometimes you need to justify those choices to someone who is sitting at the same level. Or, maybe you need to accept an idea that doesn't agree with your own, but you find a way to mix it in. I think it can often lead to stronger work, if you can find the right person to collaborate with on divergent ideas and make something that is cohesive.

If you could integrate one other Munsch story into the play, what would it be and why?

S: We both agree that Mud Puddle would be a fun story to put onstage! It's about a sentient mud puddle, and every time the child goes out to play, the mud puddle attacks her so she has to go back inside to get changed.

K: It definitely has the "joy of humour" in it that we were previously talking about.

What you would like teachers to know?

K: When trying to get kids into reading and engaging with storytelling, follow their interests. I think that Robert Munsch stories are a great start. For teachers, the stories are silly, kind of wacky, and there's a lot of repetition, but they are really engaging books for kids.

S: And that engagement may lead to some silliness, but it's worth it. At bed time, there are certainly nights where I regret reading Mortimer to my son, because I get the "clang clang rattle bing bang" when it's actually time to sleep, but I have to catch myself and remember to let this fun be part of the learning.

K: It's similar in a classroom. The noise in the room isn't always bad noise – it can mean they're being creative, engaging with each other, they're excited, and they're having fun. Enjoy the noise!

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

K: We love getting letters or drawings from classrooms about their experience! We would love to hear what you thought of the show.

Costume Sketches from the Costume Designer: Jung A Im



Costume designs for characters Mortimer, Sister, and Mother, from YPT's 2025 production of Love You Forever and More Munsch.

Curriculum Expectations

By participating in the exercises in this study guide, students will:

The Arts: Drama

- engage in dramatic play and role play, with a focus on exploring themes, ideas, characters, and issues from imagination or in stories from diverse communities, times, and places
- express thoughts, feelings, and ideas about a variety of drama experiences and performances

The Arts: Visual Art

- demonstrate an understanding of composition, using principles of design to create narrative art works or art works on a theme or topic
- use elements of design in art works to communicate ideas, messages, and understandings
- explain how elements and principles of design are used to communicate meaning or understanding in their own and others' art work

The Kindergarten Curriculum

- demonstrate a sense of identity and a positive self-image
- show understanding of the multiple perspectives and diversity among individuals, groups, and communities in Canada, and identify areas of connection
- respond to a variety of forms of dance, drama, music, and visual arts from various cultures and communities, including using their language and mathematics knowledge and skills
- explore and create a variety of art forms, including dance, drama, music, and visual arts

Language

- use effective listening skills, including asking questions to clarify information and ideas, in formal and informal contexts for various purposes, including in small- and large-group conversations and various classroom activities
- describe ways in which images, graphics, and visual design are used in a given text, and demonstrate an understanding of their purpose and connection to the content of the text
- generate and develop ideas about given and chosen topics, using various strategies, and drawing on various resources, including their own lived experiences, and learning from other subject areas

Health and Physical Education

- apply skills that help them build relationships, develop empathy, and communicate with others as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support healthy relationships, a sense of belonging, and respect for diversity
- apply skills that help them develop self-awareness and self-confidence as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support the development of a sense of identity and a sense of belonging
- apply skills that help them think critically and creatively as they participate in learning experiences in health and physical education, in order to support making connections, analysing, evaluating, problem solving, and decision making

Units of Study

The activities in these units of study encourage students to interact with the play's content actively, fostering a deeper understanding of the story's themes.

Pre-Show Unit of Study

Pre-Show Discussion Questions

- What is a community? What does it mean to belong in a community?
- What are values? How can people respect others' values when they are different from their own?
- How can people show respect to themselves and to others?
- What does it look like to be independent?

Pre-Show Activity 1: Human Machine

Objective: Students will develop their creativity and collaboration through making their own choices and seeing how that impacts their community.

Materials: Large open space for students to move around.

Instructions:

1. Ask students to stand in a circle.
2. Ask one student to make a noise and a simple repeatable gesture. Encourage students to use their whole body, while still being safe.
3. Encourage the next student in the circle to join in, making a new noise and movement that connects to the first student in some way.
4. Going around the circle, each student will join in with a new noise and gesture, connecting with the previous student, until all students are involved in creating the machine.
5. Stop each student from doing their noise and movement one by one.

Debrief:

Ask your students...

- What kind of machine do you imagine that we created? What do you think our machine makes?
- What was your part of the machine doing?
- How could we make the machine even better?

Extension:

- Divide students into groups and ask them to choose a type of machine (e.g., ice cream machine, pasta machine, printer). Give them time to create the machine with movement and sound, ensuring every group member is included. Students can then present their machines to the class and have the other students guess what kind of machine they made.

Accommodations:

- Students can complete this task seated in a circle.
- Students can add just a noise or gesture, instead of both.
- Students can share their gesture and sound one at a time, instead of building on each other. This will reduce the noise levels and stimulation in the room.

Pre-Show Activity 2: Community Chain

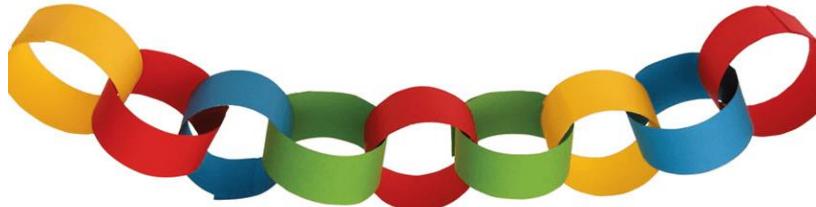
Objective: Students will gain an understanding of how everyone is included and connected in the classroom community bringing their own unique perspectives and interests.

Materials: Construction paper, scissors (one pair for teacher), glue/tape (either just for teacher, or for students to help), colouring utensils, desks, chairs, open space.

Instructions:

1. Cut construction paper into strips (size should be medium-large so that students have space to decorate them). Cut enough strips for each student to have one (and extras in case students make mistakes).

2. Students will sit at their desks as the teacher hands out strips of construction paper and colouring utensils to each student.
3. Once students have their strip of paper, provide students 15-20 minutes to decorate it in a way that represents who they are, without sharing anything too personal. For example, students can draw:
 - Favourite hobbies
 - Favourite colour
 - Favourite school subject
 - Family members
 - Favourite foods
 - Pets
4. When students have completed their strips of paper, ask them to gather in a big empty space (e.g. the carpet).
5. Start gluing or taping the strips together to make a paper chain like this:



6. Strips can be attached either by the teacher or students.
7. As the chain is being created, if students feel comfortable, they can share what they decided to put on their chain link and why.
8. After the debrief, teachers can hang the community chain in the classroom, as a reminder of what makes each student special.

Debrief:

Ask your students...

- When looking at the chain, what do you notice first? Are there any differences or similarities in each chain link? Why do you think that is?
- How do these similarities and differences make this chain unique? How is this like our classroom community?
- What happens if we take out a chain link? How does that affect the chain?

Accommodations:

- Students can design their chain links in partners or small groups
- Students can design their chain link on the computer

Post-Show Unit of Study

Post-Show Discussion Questions

- How can someone show appreciation for important people in their life?
- When do we use our imaginations in our everyday lives?
- What is something that Mortimer learns on his journey throughout the different stories?
- Why do you think it's important to use your imagination?

Post-Show Activity 1: Kindness Bingo

Objective: Students will think about how kindness is spread and will practice spreading kindness to the people around them.

Materials: Colouring utensils. For older students – blank bingo cards (see [appendix](#)) and chart paper or a board to write on. For younger students – pre-filled bingo cards (see [appendix](#)).

Instructions:

1. Print out bingo cards (either blank or pre-filled).
2. Distribute bingo cards and colouring utensils to students.
3. For older students, instruct them to think of as many acts of kindness as they can and write their ideas on the board or chart paper. Ask students to fill out their bingo cards with their favourite ones and decorate the squares.
4. For younger students, distribute the pre-filled bingo cards and instruct students to decorate each square.
5. Explain to students that throughout the next week (or any duration the teacher chooses), students are encouraged to complete as many acts of kindness from their bingo card as possible. Once they complete an act, they can mark it off with an X.
6. When a student finishes a row and gets “bingo”, they can receive a prize/recognition of your choice (e.g. a sticker, a certificate, etc.)
7. Encourage students to try to complete the entire bingo card before the allotted time runs out!

Debrief:

Ask your students...

- How did it feel to do something kind for someone else?
- What was the easiest act of kindness to do? What was the hardest?
- Why do you think it's important to be kind to others?
- How can we help remind each other to be kind every day?

Accommodations:

- Class can do one bingo card together and try to fill up the whole board as one team.
- Teacher can add images to the bingo card so students who can't read yet are able to participate fully.

Post-Show Activity 2 – Character Perspectives

Objective: Students will use their imagination by trying to think from a different perspective.

Materials: Paper with template (see appendix), colouring utensils, desks, and chairs.

Instructions:

1. Hand out a character template (see appendix) and colouring utensils to each student.
2. Instruct students to imagine the world through the eyes of the character that you give them. Represent this by drawing it on the template.
3. Students will answer questions from the character's perspective through drawings. They may add words if they choose.
4. Student or teacher (at teacher's discretion) can choose from the following list of characters:
 - Bug
 - Chair
 - Superhero
 - Airplane
 - Dragon
5. Once students are done drawing, divide them up into small groups to share their drawings. Students can discuss their vision behind the drawings.

Debrief:

Ask your students...

- Whose drawing in your group really stood out to you? Why?
- How did you use your imagination to create these drawings?
- How is this similar to what Mortimer did when he used his imagination in the play?
- Was it easy or challenging to think as another character? Why?
- How can we use our imagination to achieve our goals?

Extension:

- Students can write a story or act out a scene from the perspective that they drew.

Glossary

Acts of Kindness: Actions that one can take to help other people or care for them in some way.

Community: A group with shared characteristics, such as location, norms, culture, values, customs, or identity. Communities often support each other, share a connection, influence one another, and provide a sense of belonging.

Imagination: The ability to be creative or problem-solve, thinking beyond the current reality.

Independent: Being able to do things by yourself.

Perspective: The way that things are seen from certain point of view.

Values: What you believe is important, which determines how you act in life. For example, being honest, being kind, family, or helping the environment.

Appendix

Post-Show Activity 1: Kindness Bingo

B	I	N	G	O
		FREE ★		

B	I	N	G	O
Compliment someone	Give someone a high five	Return an item to its intended location in your classroom	Hold the door open for someone	Let someone go ahead of you in line
Help with a chore at home	Make a card for a loved one	Think of 3 things you are grateful for	Say "thank you" when someone helps you	Play with someone new at recess
Clean up a mess you didn't make	Help set or clear the table for dinner	FREE 	Make someone laugh	Recycle something
Help someone carry their things	Donate an item to charity	Draw a picture for a friend or family member	Share your toys	Help a friend with their schoolwork
Call a friend or family member	Teach a friend a new game	Lend an item to someone who needs it	Make a thank-you card for your teacher	Ask your family how their day went

Post-Show Activity 2: Character Perspectives

Who am I?	
What do I like?	
Who are my friends?	
What do I like to do?	

Sources

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