



FOUNDED 1809

WALNUT STREET THEATRE EDUCATION

POLKA DOTS



The Cool Kids Musical

STUDY GUIDE

Walnut Street Theatre Touring Outreach '24-'25

SHOW SYNOPSIS

A musical about shapes who learn to appreciate each other's unique qualities and use their differences to create something beautiful together!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Before

- Can you think of different things that make people unique or special?
- How do you make people feel 'included'?
- Have you heard of the word "diversity"?
- What do you predict will happen?

After

- How did Lily overcome the challenges of being different from everyone else?
- What can we learn from people who have different experiences or come from different places?
- What is one thing you can do today to be a good friend to someone who might feel left out?

THEATRE 101

PLAYWRIGHT: The person who writes the script.

DIRECTOR: The person in charge of orchestrating the entirety of the production. They lead the actors, designers, and production crew to put the show on its feet.

COSTUMES: What the actors wear during the show.

SCENERY: Everything on stage (except props) used to represent the setting, or the place in which the story is occurring.

PROPS: All physical items on stage with the exception of the scenery. This includes lamps, chairs, pens, paper, books, and more!

LIGHTS: Stage lights illuminate the actors so that they look their best. The colors used, focus of the light, and amount of lighting can really set the mood and environment of a scene.

SOUND: Everything that you hear during a performance that does not come from the actors.

ACTORS: The actors are the people that perform the show on-stage.

AUDIENCE: The lucky people that get to watch the show!

Curious About Putting on a Play?
There are lots of parts to making a show. Check out these key terms with your students!

AUDIENCE RULES

- **Be a Good Audience:** Keep quiet—no talking, sleeping, or poking your neighbor. The actors can see and hear you, so let's not distract them!
- **Leave Gadgets at Home:** No phones, cameras, or tablets during the show. They might distract everyone.
- **React at the Right Time:** Laugh, clap, and cry when it feels right. And don't forget to give a big clap at the end!
- **Stay in Your Seat:** Stay seated throughout the show. It helps everyone see and enjoy.
- **Bathroom Before the Show:** Make sure to visit the bathroom before the performance starts.



ACTIVITY: SHAPE SHUFFLE

1. **Shape Circle!** : Arrange chairs in a big, open circle. Just remember, there should be one less chair than the number of players.
2. **Who's the Shape Spinner?** : The person without a chair gets to start in the middle of the circle. They are our "Shape Spinner" for this round!
3. **Shape Statement** : The Shape Spinner will say, "The shapes shuffle for anyone who..." and then finish with something related to their own experiences, like "The shape spins for anyone who has an older brother!" or "The shape spins for anyone who rode the bus to school today!"
4. **Shape Shuffle!** : If the statement matches something about you, hop up and *quickly* find a new chair. But here's the twist—you can't sit in the chair right next to you!
5. **Who Spins Next?** : The person left standing in the middle becomes the new Shape Spinner and gets to come up with the next fun statement!
6. **Keep Shuffling!** : Keep playing until everyone has had a chance to be the Shape Spinner!

DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

Lily Polkadot was treated differently because she looked differently than everyone else in her town. She kept her head held high until others started accept her for who she is. As a class, discuss ways you can make everyone feel accepted and wanted for who they truly are.

- What are some ways we can show kindness to someone who is different from us?
- Can you think of a time when you felt left out? How did it make you feel, and what could have made you feel better?
- What do you think everyone has in common, even if they look or act differently?
- How can we make sure everyone in our class or group feels like they belong?



BRING THE SHOW TO LIFE

Before diving into the scene below, talk with your class about the different elements in a play. What is the setting of the scene? What is the conflict? What props could they use to help tell the story?

SAMPLE SCENE QUESTIONS

If you were Lily, how would you react to Penelope's feelings towards you?

What would you do if you felt like your whole school was against you?

If you were Sky, how would you find the courage to stand up for your friend and what is right?

If you were a different character in this scene, how would you stand up for Lily?

SAMPLE SCENE

(A dodge ball flies out of nowhere and hits LILY.)

LILY: Ow! *(PENELOPE rushes on.)*

PENELOPE: Oh! I'm sorry! I totally didn't see you there.

LILY: It's okay. I'm sure it was an accident.

PENELOPE: Of course it was! But I am a genius!

LILY: You are?

PENELOPE: YES! I just created the single most amazing playground game ever!

LILY: What?!

PENELOPE: DOT BALL!

LILY: Dot ball?

PENELOPE: Yes! You stand in the middle and we all throw balls at your dots. *(She starts pointing at dots on LILY'S skin)* This dot is worth 25 points. And this one is worth 50. And this one *(she points at the big dot around LILY'S eye)* is worth 100 points. I think I'll try to hit that one first. Stay there. **13** *(PENELOPE grabs the ball and rears back, ready to throw it at LILY. SKY enters and grabs the ball from her hands just as she is about to throw it.)*

SKY: Leave her alone Penelope!

PENELOPE: You little brat!

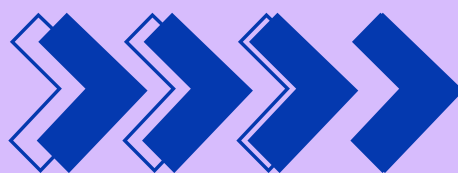
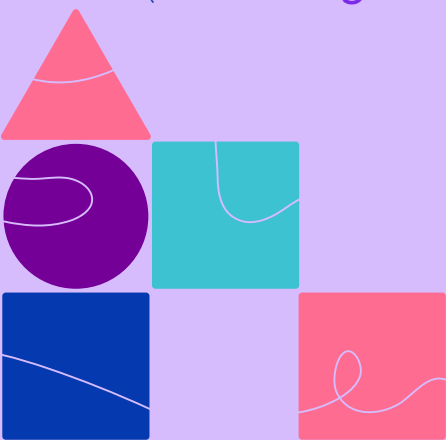
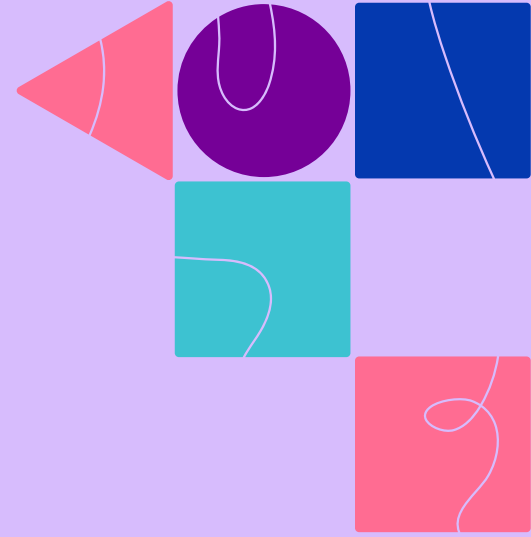
SKY: If you don't stop I will tell Ms. Square!

PENELOPE: And I will tell Mom you were playing with the "dot!"

SKY: Her name is Lily!

PENELOPE: Her name is Dot. Rhymes with spot. A...a...and...and not. As in NOT WELCOME HERE. Now GO AWAY!

LILY: *(stands her ground, but isn't mean)* It can also mean, not afraid of you.



Words in parenthesis
are not read out loud!
They describe the
action of the scene!

REFERENCE SHEET

Inclusivity

making sure everyone feels welcome and included, no matter how different they might be. It's like inviting everyone to join in, so nobody feels left out

DIVERSITY

having a lot of different kinds of people, ideas, and things all together. It's like a big box of crayons with many different colors. Each color is unique and adds something special, and together they make a beautiful picture!

Equality

treating everyone the same way and giving everyone the same opportunities. It's like giving each kid a turn on the swing, so everyone gets a chance to play

DISCOVER THE LITTLE ROCK NINE!

Who Were They?

The Little Rock Nine were 9 brave students who went to a school called Little Rock Central High in Arkansas in 1957. They were the first Black students to go to that school, which used to be for white students only.

Why Was It Important?

Back then, some schools were only for white kids, and Black kids couldn't go to them. This was unfair and not right. The Little Rock Nine showed everyone that all kids, no matter their skin color, should be able to go to school together and learn from each other.

What Happened?

When the Little Rock Nine first tried to go to their new school, there were many people who didn't want them there and tried to stop them. But they were very brave and strong. With the help of a lot of important people, they were finally able to go to school and learn with everyone else.



Why Do We Remember Them?

The Little Rock Nine helped change things for the better. They taught us that everyone deserves to be treated equally and have the same chances. Because of their courage, schools today are much more welcoming and inclusive.



How Can We Be Like The Little Rock Nine?

Be Brave: Stand up for what's right, even if it's hard.

Be Kind: Treat everyone with respect and fairness.

Be Inclusive: Make sure everyone feels welcome and included, just like how the *Little Rock Nine* wanted to be treated fairly.

GROUP GROOVE

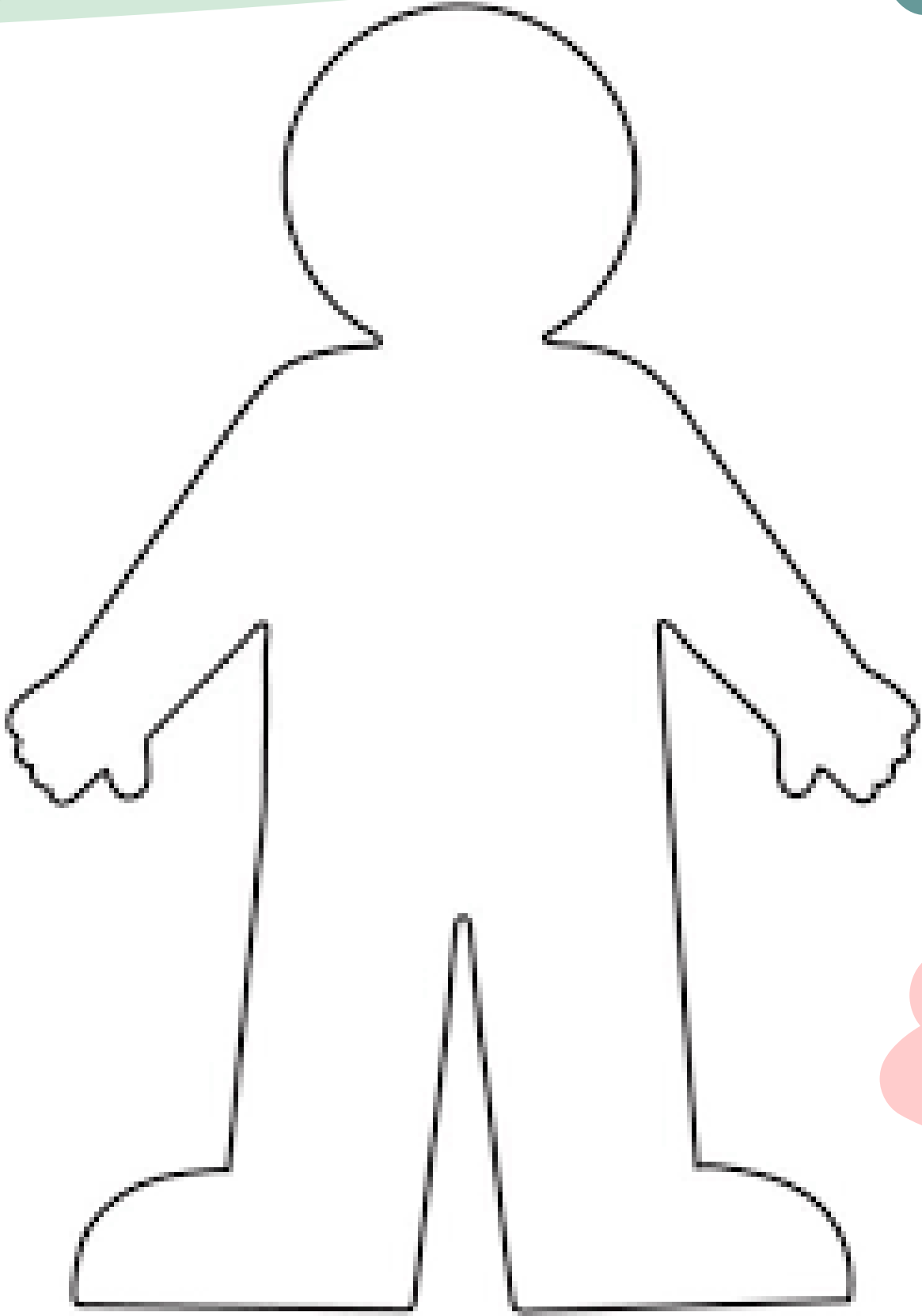
How to Play:

- 1. Get Ready to Move:** Everyone starts by walking around the room. Feel free to chat, but stay alert!
- 2. The Number Challenge:** When the teacher calls out a number, your mission is to quickly find and form a group with that exact number of classmates. For example, if the teacher says “4,” you need to stand with three other friends to make a total of four people!
- 3. Special Group Tasks:** To make things more exciting, the teacher will call out fun criteria for your group:
 - Find a group of 5 people with the same color shirt as you!
 - Find a group of 3 who have the same number of siblings as you.
 - Find a group of 4 people who have birthdays in the same month as you!
- 4. Time’s Ticking:** There’s a timer set for 15 seconds. You’ve got to form your group and complete the challenge before time runs out! If you’re not in a group by the time the timer beeps, you’ll sit out for that round—but don’t worry, you can join in the next game!
- 5. Switch it Up:** After each round, the teacher will call a new number and a new criteria. Be ready to switch groups and tackle new challenges.



Craft Your Shape-tacular Costume!

Use different shapes to design a costume as if you were a character in the show! Let your creativity shine with a mix of triangles, circles, squares, and more!



How many
people does it
take to put on a
show?

PRODUCTION TEAM

DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER:

Taylor J. Mitchell

MUSIC DIRECTOR:

Kennedy Mcalister

STAGE MANAGER & PRODUCTION MANAGER:

Maya Chester-Ziv

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER:

Devon Duffy

WRITTEN BY:

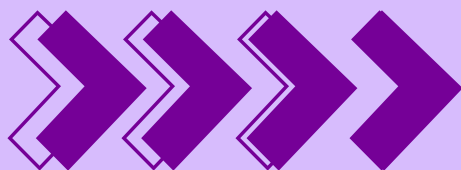
Douglas Lyons, Melvin Tunstall III, & Greg Borowsky

PROPS ARTISAN/ SCENIC DESIGN:

Clare Wislar

COSTUME DESIGNER:

Emily Marcus



CAST

Lily Polkadot:

Briana Myers

Sky Square:

Isaac Ripley

Penelope Square:

Lindsey McCue

Mr. Square/ Papa Square:

Joey B. Williams

13 people helped create
this show for you!



WALNUT STREET THEATRE

EDUCATION

Walnut Street Theatre has the unique distinction of being the oldest, continuously operating theatre in the English-speaking world, having served Philadelphia audiences for over 210 years! Due to the direction of Producing Artistic Director Bernard Havard, Walnut Street Theatre has been a self-producing, non-profit theatre company for over 30 seasons. Walnut Street Theatre continues to entertain and enlighten diverse audiences with high quality theatrical programming. With more than 50,000 subscribers, the Walnut is also the most-subscribed theatre company in the world! Last season, 172,000 children and adults were impacted by the Walnut's Education Programs, including our theatre school with classes for kids and adults, Camp Walnut, Our Touring Outreach Program to local schools, and our artist-in-residency programs.



DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:

T.J Sokso

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION:

Amanda Pasquini

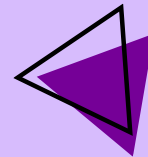
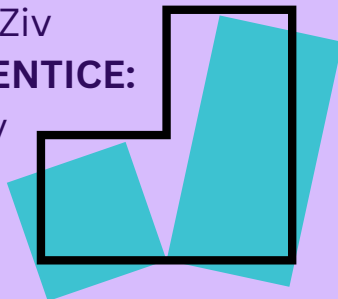
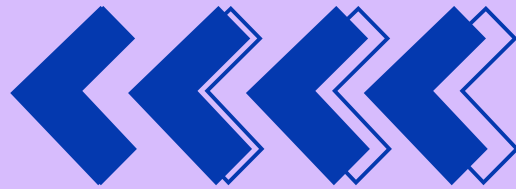
EDUCATION PROGRAMS

MANAGER:

Maya Chester-Ziv

EDUCATION APPRENTICE:

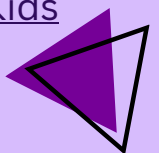
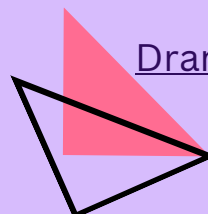
Devon Duffy



Additional Resources:

[Walnut Street Theatre
For Kids](#)

[Drama Games for Kids](#)



WALNUT STREET THEATRE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Theatre School at Walnut Street Theatre

Classes for kids, students, and adults! For students of all ages! Great for networking, providing a creative outlet, and professional training.

Find your inner star at the Walnut!

Call 215-574-3550, ext. 510

Walnut Street Theatre Residency Program

Let us design a dramatic and educational program for your school! We support teacher's objectives with personalized programs that meet your needs and budget.

Call 215-574-3550, ext. 566

Walnut Street Theatre for Kids

Bring your kids to Walnut Street Theatre! Bring a show to your school! Open a dialogue with students about important issues that affect them!

Call 215-574-3550 , ext. 566

Walnut Street Theatre Touring Outreach

Bring a show to your school! Open a dialogue with students about important issues that affect them!

Call 215-574-3550 , ext. 584