The Tallest Poppy

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Thursday & Friday, October 6 & 7, 2005
10:45 a.m.
The Coliseum
YOUR ROLE IN THE PRODUCTION

ARRIVAL Please plan to arrive at least 20 minutes before show time. Proceed to the entrance with your group and look for the sign-in table. A designated representative must stop and sign in for the entire group.

Upon entrance, ushers will seat groups on a first come, first served basis and will seat your group as quickly and as efficiently as possible. After your group is seated, the restroom may be visited. Young students should be escorted.

EXITING Ushers will help your group move out of the theater in a quick and orderly fashion. You will be directed to the parking area using various routes. Exit routes may be different from your entrance path due to the ingress of students entering for the next performance. Please follow the ushers’ directions.

DIRECTIONS TO THE COLISEUM

Take I-275 to Exit 23A then Exit 2 which becomes 4th Avenue North. The Coliseum is on the left/north side. Follow the directions of our parking staff.

QUESTIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Class Acts, The Coliseum
535 4th Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33701-4346
ATTN: Class Acts/ Perkins Elementary School
Pony Route #5
Phone 727-892-5800
Fax 727-892-5770
www.stpete.org/mahaffey.htm
Before the Show

• Host a classroom debate about the value of cliques. Have half of the class argue in favor of cliques and half argue in favor of the independent individual.

• Eleni Kelakos’ original study guide is broken up into five distinct areas of discussion corresponding to different parts of her theme song, The Tallest Poppy (lyrics on page 12). Using the lyrics on page 12 as a springboard, use the following suggested questions to help spark your students into a rap session or writing activity about how they view themselves and others.

  o “Uniqueness and Potential”: How does it feel to be different from someone else? Is being different from your friends a good or a bad thing? How do you treat people who are different from you? Have you ever tried to change something about yourself in order to please someone else or fit in? Have you heard the song from the commercial that says: “be all that you can be”? What do you think about that?

  o “Facing Obstacles”: What kind of obstacles have you faced/are you facing in your life right now? What do you do when faced with an obstacle? Do you get discouraged, or do you find a way to keep on going? Can obstacles be a good thing? How? Are there ever times when you’ve been your own obstacle?

  o “When Others Limit Us”: How does it feel when you are trying to achieve something and someone says: “That’s impossible!” or “You can’t do that!” Is there ever a time when going against the rules is the right choice? Have you ever let other people make you feel less special (smart, attractive, able) than you really are? What’s more important: what you believe or what others believe? Why? What are the messages TV tells us about being girls? About being boys? Can girls be tall? Can girls like sports? Math and science? Can boys be short? Can boys enjoy cooking? Dolls? Dancing?

  o “The Power of Choice”: Do you trust the little voice inside that tells you when something is absolutely right for you? “Life is a series of choices – so choose wisely.” Do you think this statement is true? Do you think what you choose to be and how you choose to act is important? Do you let other people make important decisions for you, even when you feel they’re wrong? How do you choose your friends? Have you ever made the choice to keep on going even when something was really tough? When? How did you go about doing that?

  o “Setting an Example”: What person do you admire? What is it about them that makes you admire them? Some people lead and some follow: Are you a leader? How can you make sure you are worthy of leading? Are you a follower? How can you make sure you are following someone worthy of leading? When it comes to performing any task (chores, homework, etc.): Do you think it’s important to “try your best” or is it okay to “just slide by?”

In This Issue Your Students Will:

• Use context clues and critical thinking skills to comprehend reading piece and solve word problems.
  (8th grade: LA.A.1.3.; pages 4 & 5, 5th grade: MA.B.1.1.; page 7 & 8)

• Construct a personal mission statement.
  (Grades 6 & 7: LA.B.2.3.; page 9)

• Strengthen reading comprehension skills by identifying the main idea and supporting details.
  (8th grade: LA.A.1.3.; pages 4 & 5)

• Learn fun facts about the poppy.
  (Grades 6 & 7: SC.F.1.3.; page 9)

• Explore personal feelings about themselves and social issues they face every day.
  (All grades; page 9)

• Measure parts of a poppy: height, width, area, diameter, and radius.
  (5th grade: MA.B.1.1.; pages 7 & 8)

• Review some basic etiquette principles.
  (All grades; page 10)

After the Show

Discuss the powerful quotations on page 12 in your classroom (See “Quotations,” page 12). Use the following questions to kick off a group discussion or a writing exercise:

What is the speaker saying in these quotes? Do you agree or disagree with the statement? Why?

What aspects of our culture may be limiting people, preventing them from being all they can be?
The Popular Papaver

It may take a long time to bloom (approximately 30 days germination time 1), but when it does, the poppy, or *papaver somniferum*, as it’s called, is a flower of remarkable beauty and value. Because of its unique structure and vibrant color, poppies make a beautiful vase flower. However, nothing compares with the sight of a field of poppies in full bloom. (Remember that scene in the Wizard of Oz when Dorothy and her friends came upon that field of poppies and fell asleep?) This plant is so versatile, that single parts of a single poppy can be used as a condiment, a pain reliever and a tasty snack!

The poppy has been around for a very long time – some sources say between 3,000 to 5,000 years. Folklore has it that in Europe young girls used poppy pods to find their true love. The story goes that if a girl was interested in a certain boy, she would take a poppy petal, place it in the palm of her intended’s hand, and hit it with her hand. If it made a popping sound (as they supposedly do upon blooming from the bud casing), he was her true love 2.

The poppy is symbolic as well. One type of poppy, the *Eschsholtzia californica*, is the official flower of the state of California. Every year this particular poppy is celebrated throughout the state on April 6, (California Poppy Day)3. In several countries around the world, the red poppy is an emblem of remembrance, honoring military servicemen for their supreme sacrifice in times of war 4. (See sidebar).

Wars have even been fought over the flower itself. In the 1800’s Britain and China fought two wars over the use of opium, a substance derived from the capsule of the opium poppy and used to treat pain 5.

Poppy seeds have been used to flavor food since ancient times. In India, the seeds are an ingredient in a pancake called a chupatie 6. In the Middle East, the seeds are toasted for a nutty flavored snack 7. Here in America, poppy seeds are baked into breads and rolls and added to vegetables and salad dressings for extra flavor 8.

Some people consider the poppy to be a weed because it grows so easily in the wild. They dismiss it as a simple wild flower. But careful examination of the flower, its delicate structure and its many uses, generates a true appreciation for this unique work of nature.

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1. [http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu](http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu)
2. [www.vandycks.com/kids](http://www.vandycks.com/kids)
3. [www.50states.com/flower/california](http://www.50states.com/flower/california)
4. [www.canoe.ca/Remembranceday.popp](http://www.canoe.ca/Remembranceday.popp)
5. [www.univ.trieste.it/brain/NeuroBiol](http://www.univ.trieste.it/brain/NeuroBiol)
6. [www.botanical.com](http://www.botanical.com)
7. [www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/13825.cf](http://www.somersetmedicalcenter.com/13825.cf)
8. [www.mccormick.com](http://www.mccormick.com)
Even though the title *The Popular Papaver* is a spiffy one, which one of the following might make another good title?

a. The Poppy: A War Remembrance  
b. It’s Not Just a Weed, It’s a Very Versatile Wild Flower!  
c. A Poppy is Good Eatin’!  
d. Find Your Man Using the Poppy Test

What’s a synonym for *germinate*?

a. to bloom  
b. to spread germs  
c. to plant  
d. to pollinate

What’s the author trying to communicate by writing this article? Is he trying to persuade, educate, or both?

Answers: 1. b.; 2. a; 3. He is trying to both persuade the reader to believe that the poppy is a valuable flower and to educate the reader on the poppy’s history.
MEASURE FOR MEASURE

P
1. How tall is the poppy plant from top to bottom?

2. How wide is the whole plant from the widest point left to the widest point right?

3. Rounding to the nearest quarter inch, find the length and width of the leaf marked with a “P.”

4. Using the formula \(\text{AREA} = \text{L} \times \text{W}\), can you find the area of that leaf marked “P?”

5. If the diameter of the bloom is 3.5”, what’s the radius?
A MISSION STATEMENT is basically a sentence or two that states your purpose or mission in life.

What's YOUR Mission in Life?

Use this empty flower form and follow the guidelines on page 9 to construct your own personal mission statement.
The center of the flower is where the parts are located that allow the flower to prosper. Now it’s time to write your statement. Take a look at what you’ve come up with: your needs, your contributions, your values and who you are. Keeping all this in mind, try to come up with one statement that sums up your purpose or mission in life.

Air, water and light are converted in the leaves to a substance that nourishes the plant called glucose. In order for us to stay nourished, our needs must be met. We also need to help others. Both of these: having our needs met and meeting the needs of others help us to be whole and healthy. On one leaf to list your needs, and on the other, list ways you can help meet others’ needs in your family, school or community.

The stem allows the nutrients to flow from the soil to the rest of the plant. In the same way, how we view ourselves to be (daughter, friend, kind, thoughtful, etc.) carries us through our lives as we make decisions that dictate which way our lives will go. In the space inside the stem, write some descriptive words about who you are.

Soil is where the plant gets its nourishment through its roots. Our values are the things that nourish us. In the area beneath the soil on the previous page, write several words describing the things that are important to you.
A Moment for Etiquette

You may not be aware of it, but, like a rock thrown in a pond causes ripples that travel outward from its source, so sound travels in ripples from its source - no matter how soft the noise is.

In a huge auditorium, sound travels and bounces off the walls, the floor and the ceiling - making the sound last longer and seem louder than it really is. That’s why a whisper sounds so much louder in a huge empty room. If several people whisper at the same time, or even within seconds of each other, the sound travels around the room.

Please keep this in mind as you enjoy Eleni’s Kelakos’ Tallest Poppy in the Coliseum. It’s a huge cavernous space where sound travels fast and easily. Just as you want and deserve the utmost respect from others when you speak or watch something, so Ms. Kelakos and those around you deserve the same respect to speak, to listen, and be heard. Besides, you’ll have plenty of time to talk on the bus!

... And this show is sure to give you plenty to talk about!
Theatergoers attending Eleni Kelakos’ *The Tallest Poppy* will experience the force of Kelakos’ tremendous talent on three fronts. The audience will be treated to music composed by the artist herself, containing clever, insightful and thought-provoking lyrics and artful melodies including “My Body is My Rocketship,” “What if Barbie Was Taller than Ken?” and Choose to Choose,” as well as the critically acclaimed “The Tallest Poppy” (lyrics on page 12). Every song is presented with a vocal quality one critic described as having “… an almost shocking clarity, unlike any singer since Joan Baez.” The music is pieced together with witty and creative storytelling intertwining prudent wisdom of life lessons to benefit young audiences. Kelakos’ accomplished background and powerful stage presence carry the performance to a level of excellence that make for an inspiring hour of dynamic entertainment.

Eleni Kelakos possesses an intimate understanding of self-empowerment and self-realization – subjects about which she has a passion borne of practical and sometimes painful experience. At six foot, she truly is a tall poppy who has earned her wisdom through her own life journey and who gained professional experience on the stage as well as the big and small screens.

As a child, Eleni traveled extensively throughout Europe and the Middle East, following her parent’s foreign service career. After discovering her penchant for performing at eleven, Eleni went on to study theater and semiotics at Brown University before embarking on an acting career that included such accomplishments as appearing in the film *Bill and Ted’s Bogus Journey* and the television series *Beverly Hills 90210*, as well as performing with such prestigious national theater companies as La Mama ETC and The Guthrie Theatre.


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1 semiotics: The study of the signs and symbols used in language and other systems of communication.
In the workbook, children are prompted and encouraged by Petal, the “star” of The Tallest Poppy song, to create their own “story” through creative exercises that explore their thoughts and feelings about being “tall poppies” in their own right. Like Petal, each workbook participant faces his or her own obstacles and creatively discovers ways to overcome them and push past his or her own limit signs – coming out in full bloom!

Five chapters focus on the five key lessons of the Tallest Poppy song:

1. Celebrating our Uniqueness
2. Discovering the Limit Sign
3. Facing Obstacles
4. The Power of Choice
5. Setting and Example

The overall theme is recognizing and deepening our uniqueness vs. diminishing ourselves, our goals or our abilities in order to fit in with our peers.

Activities and exercises include:

- Writing: answering thought-provoking questions; penning an inspiring, self-encouraging poem or letter
- Drawing/making art: creating a “treasure map” that celebrates the child’s hopes and dreams using various artistic mediums
- Sharing thoughts, feelings and concerns with caring adults (for example, playing reporter and interviewing their parents-- and vice versa-- on the concept of teasing/bullying/fitting in)
- Looking through newspapers and magazines for articles about people persecuted for being different or having different beliefs than their peers

Once a child has completed his workbook, it will serve as a motivating and inspirational tool that can be visited again and again-- a place where a child’s hopes, dreams and uniqueness are encouraged and celebrated.

The workbook will be available to all teachers attending the show and includes a CD copy of the song, The Tallest Poppy, as well as sheet music (for piano accompaniment) and song lyrics. The Tallest Poppy song can also be dowloaded in mp3 format at www.tallestpoppy.com.
FROM THE TALLEST POPPY WORKBOOK:

PETAL SAYS: When it feels like you’ve got a hanging over you ... and the lights are always red, and all those obstacles and “CAN’Ts make you feel like you’re stuck in a ..... 

Turn your CAN’Ts into CANS!
1. List five CAN’Ts

I CAN’T

I CAN’T

I CAN’T

I CAN’T

I CAN’T

then,
2. Take a colored pen and SCRATCH OUT THE “N’T” in all those “Can’ts!”
3. Now, read those sentences out loud! Different, huh?

SAYING “I CAN” is POWERFUL!!!!
Resourses to Read, Surf and Listen to, etc.

Books


Devillers, Julia, Girlwise: How to be Confident, Capable, Cool and in Control, Three Rivers Press, 2002

Dobson, James P., Shaping the Next Generation of Men, Tyndale House Publishers, 2001

Glennon, Will, 200 Ways to Raise a Girl’s Self-Esteem, Conari Press, 1999

Gurian, Michael, The Wonder of Boys, Tarcher, 1999

Gurian, Michael, A Fine Young Man, Tarcher, 1999


Kindlon, Dan, Ph.D., and Thompson, Michael, Raising Cain, Ballantine Books, 2000

Pipher, Mary, Reviving Ophelia, Ballantine Books, 2002

Quotations

“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves “who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? … Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightening about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you … as we let our own light shine, we give other people permission to do the same.”

Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech

“With puberty girls crash into junk culture … America today limits girls’ development, truncates their wholeness and leaves many of them traumatized.”

Mary Pipher, Ph.D.: REVIVING OPHELIA

The Tallest Poppy

©E.Kelakos/Leggy Cat Music/ASCAP2000

Verse One: (“Uniqueness and Potential”)

In a field of poppies, taller than a flame
Lived a baby poppy, Petal was her name
From the moment she was born, she reached for the sky
Deep inside a little voice dared her to aim high. It said:

CHORUS: Be the tallest poppy, be all that you are
Be the tallest poppy, dare to touch the stars
Stand up proud and stretch your wings and
Set yourself apart
Be the tallest poppy with the tallest heart

Verse Two: (“When Others Limit Us”)

Rules and regulations in the poppy land
Made it clear to Petal that growing tall was bad
Don’t grow past your neighbors, was the final word
Petal just ignored it, ’cause inside she heard

CHORUS

Bridge: (“Facing Obstacles”)

And the wind, it tried to blow her down
The rain to push her flat
And the bugs, they bit and tortured her
While the poppies turned their backs

Verse Three: (“The Power of Choice” and “Setting an Example”)

But Petal kept on growing, past the limit sign
Shot up like an arrow flaming in the sky
And from far below her, a clamor could be heard:
A hundred baby poppies, reaching up to her, singing:

CHORUS

Be sure to visit Eleni’s website at www.tallestpoppy.com and hear some of her inspiring music!!!