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# Skippyjon Jones

## STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Skippyjon Jones as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as a related activity sheet. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

### Background

Our play is based on the book Skippyjon Jones by author Judy Schachner.

### The Story

- Skippyjon Jones, a male Siamese kitten, lives with his sisters and his mother. He is the family troublemaker who always thinks he's another animal such as a bird, a bat or a whale.
- One day he gets in trouble and his mother sends him to his room. While he's there he bounces on the bed and notices as he passes the mirror that he actually looks like a chihuahua and decides that he must really be a dog.
- Fantasizing as "Skippito Friskito", he travels to Mexico where he meets up with a group of chihuahuas who are in fear of the evil Alfredo Buzzito, a bumblebee who demands beans from the dogs. The dogs tell Skippyjon that he is the answer to the prophesy that a stranger will come and free them from their tormentor.
- When Skippyjon confronts Alfredo he doesn't act heroic but is humiliated and revealed to all as a kitten, not a chihuahua. All the chihuahuas are disappointed except Rosalita who convinces him that he can still defeat Alfredo.
- Skippito is inspired once more and with the help of all his friends, he battles the bumblebee and wins, piercing Alfredo till he bursts. At that point, it is revealed that Alfredo is really the piñata from his closet that he has destroyed, and all the chihuahuas are bean bag toys for his birthday party. His family celebrates Skippyjon's wild imagination and all is forgiven.

### **Before Seeing the Play**

1. You may want to read some of the Skippyjon Jones stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Discuss types of cats and dogs. In the story there are Siamese cats and Chihuahua dogs. What other kind of cat and dog breeds do you know? Who has a cat or a dog for a pet? Describe their behavior. Do they ever act like humans? Do they ever act like another kind of animal?
3. Discuss Spanish language words with the students. There are many Spanish words used in the play. What Spanish words do the children know? Ask if they know some common words such as amigo, gracias, frijoles, loco and por favor. You can find a list of words used in this production on the last page of this study guide.

### **After Seeing the Play**

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Skippyjon Jones books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the costumes. How did the actors portray cats and dogs?
2. Why do you think Skippyjon always acts like other animals? How does he feel about his family? What do they think of him?
3. Skippyjon has a very active imagination. Describe how he uses his imagination to create Old Mexico in his bedroom. How are the props used to create characters?

### **Activities**

#### *Act like an animal*

In the play, Skippyjon acts like a bird, bat, moose, whale and a dog. Have your students pick an animal to research and then portray through physical action. Each student will learn about a particular animal's behavior and traits through research in books or online. The students can then create a poster with their research facts and a picture of the animal. Without revealing their subject, have the students take turns acting as their animal while the class tries to guess what it is.

#### *Foreign Language*

*Word Wall*- Have students choose a favorite word, define it, translate it into Spanish and illustrate it. Hang up the illustrated "dictionary" pages on the wall.

#### *Artistic Expression*

In the Skippyjon Jones stories, his closet becomes a new location for each adventure. Use your imagination to create the setting for a story out of your closet.

- Bring in an item from your closet and use it to start a story.
- Find a piece of clothing and turn it into a costume for a character.

### *Poetry Comparisons*

Make acrostic poems using the words *Siamese* and *Chihuahua*. To make a poem of this type, write the letters of each word on the side of a piece of paper, and then have the students use descriptive words that focus on the animals' characteristics. An acrostic poem does not have to rhyme.

For example:

Slinky  
Interesting  
Awesome  
Mouse-catcher  
Eats cat food  
Silly ears  
Eager

### *Fiesta Time!*

Plan a fiesta with your class, create piñatas using paper mache, balloons and tissue paper. Make Mexican themed decorations and invitations. Learn about Mexican food and make some for the party to share. Put students into groups for different tasks. Parents can help too!

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Judy Schachner is an award winning author of a many children's books including the Skippyjon Jones series which includes:

- Skippyjon Jones
- Skippyjon Jones in the Doghouse
- Skippyjon Jones in Mummy Trouble
- Skippyjon Jones and the Big Bones
- Skippyjon Jones, Lost in Space
- Skippyjon Jones, Class Action

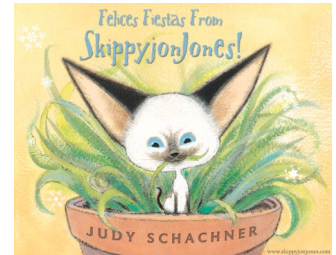
### **Internet:**

- Learn about author Judy Schachner:  
<http://www.judithbyronschachner.com/>
- Play games, watch videos, color pictures and download a curriculum guide at: <http://www.skippyjonjones.com/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Skippyjon Jones



Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:

loco	bumblebee	bounce	fetch	beans
chihuahua	Siamese	piñata	bird	fiesta

1. Skippyjon Jones woke up and thought he was a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Skippyjon loved to \_\_\_\_\_ on his bed.
3. In the mirror, he thought he saw a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The other dogs were afraid of a \_\_\_\_\_ named Alfredo Buzzito.
5. Alfredo told the dogs to “Spill the \_\_\_\_\_.”
6. Alfredo was really a \_\_\_\_\_ in Skippyjon’s closet.
7. Skippyjon is really a \_\_\_\_\_ cat.
8. When Rosalita raced the other dogs, Skippyjon told her she was “born to \_\_\_\_\_.”
9. Instead of a birthday party, Skippyjon and his family decided to have a \_\_\_\_\_ instead.

10. At the end, Skippyjon and his family sang, “Let’s go crazy \_\_\_\_\_!”

### Skippyjon Jones Vocabulary

1. adios - goodbye
2. amigo - friend
3. ¡Ay, caramba! – oh my goodness!
4. bandito – bandit
5. besito - kiss
6. cabeza - head
7. comprende -understand
8. creada para buscar – born to fetch
9. el numero uno – number one
10. fiesta - party
11. frijoles - beans
12. gato - cat
13. gordo - fat
14. gracias - thank you
15. hola - hello
16. la luna – the moon
17. loco - crazy
18. muchacho - guy
19. noche - night
20. perdoname – sorry
21. perrito – small dog
22. peso - money
23. piñata – a decorated container with treats inside to be broken with a stick as a party game
24. por favor - please
25. por que - why
26. ¿que pasa? – what’s up?
27. siesta – rest or nap
28. sombrero - hat
29. un tiempo de espera – time out
30. vamos / vamanos – let’s go