

TALKING POINTS FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: *IT'S OKAY TO BE DIFFERENT – STORIES BY TODD PARR*

Show & Theater Company:

- *It's Okay to Be Different – Stories by Todd Parr* by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia

Art Form:

- Large-scale puppetry performance with music

Context:

- This show is based on three books written by children's author Todd Parr: *It's Okay to Be Different*, *The Earth Book*, and *This is My Hair*.
- Parr is famous for his bold art style, unique sense of humor, and inclusive storytelling. The books have been adapted for the stage by Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia, who specialize in adapting children's books into stage shows.
- ? Can you think of a story you've read that makes you feel good about yourself?

Main Concepts:

- *It's Okay to Be Different* is about acceptance, understanding, and self-confidence.
 - ? What makes you feel confident? Where do you feel accepted?
- *The Earth Book* is about doing our part to keep the Earth happy and healthy.
 - ? What's one thing your family does to help the Earth?
- *This is My Hair* is about how silly hair can be and how to feel good about yourself.
 - ? If you could have any type of hair, what would it look like? What shape would it be? What color?

Special Things to Look for:

- This show uses large puppets operated by performers who appear invisible because of their black costuming.
- ? Can you figure out how the performers move the puppets? How many performers does it take to operate each one?

Theater Etiquette:

- Respect the theater, one person to a seat, limit bathroom breaks, do not kick the seats, no food or drink in the theater (bottled water okay), and turn off cell phones/no texting.
- ? How is watching live theater different than watching a movie or TV?
 - We can't pause, rewind, or fast forward with live theater.
 - Live theater is exciting because each performance is unique.
 - Students are in the same room as the performers. Moving around and making sounds can affect the performers and other members of the audience.