**Synopsis:**

Before the show begins, a man enters the theatre looking for his dog. The dog runs through the audience and ends up on the stage. The dog owner begins to yell and threaten to beat him for being a bad dog. Lucy, who’s been sitting in the audience – jumps up to stop him. She implores the dog owner to leave the dog alone, as he is a defenseless animal who wasn’t trying to do anything wrong, but when the dog owner scoffs Lucy’s pleas away, it makes her very angry. Suddenly she points her finger at the dog owner, and as if by magic, the dog and his owner switch roles.

After they leave the theatre, Lucy turns to the audience to explain about her Magic Finger. She tells us that sometimes when she gets very angry, her finger takes over. First she sees red, then she starts to get very hot, and suddenly she points her Magic Finger and changes the person who made her angry. To show us what she means, Lucy begins to tell us about an episode at school. As she tells us, she reveals her teacher so that we see what happened.

Lucy gets so mad at her teacher for being rude, that she turns her into a cat! Her classmate, William, thinks it’s pretty cool, but Lucy is not so sure. After all, it’s not something she can control. She then begins to tell us about what happened when she went to visit William.

The story shifts to the Gregg Family Farm. Lucy is visiting William for the first time. She is excited to see the farm animals, but William’s mother explains that they grow fruit and vegetables and don’t have animals on the farm. William’s mother offers the friends some ice cream, and invites Lucy to stay to eat with them. William’s father appears with a wheelbarrow full of logs that he’s just chopped. William and Lucy help him to stack the logs, until Lucy sees two dead rabbits in the wheelbarrow. Mr. Gregg explains that it’s good that the traps killed the rabbits, because they do a lot of damage to the crops. Lucy doesn’t quite agree, but even William explains that farmers sometimes need to kill animals that do damage or spread diseases. Lucy and William are interrupted by the re-appearance of Mr. Gregg, who now carries a shot gun. He tells Lucy that he always goes hunting on Saturday, and invites Lucy to join them. He explains that they shoot all kinds of birds, but today they’ll be shooting ducks. Lucy is appalled that they’d shoot anything for fun, and says she’ll wait at the farm with Mrs. Gregg. Mrs. Gregg appears and tells Lucy that she enjoys hunting as well. The Greggs, including William, go off.

(Continued on the next page...)
**Synopsis (continued):**

In the distance, we see ducks flying. We hear gun shots, and then see less ducks flying than before. The Gregg’s eventually return, carrying three dead ducks. Lucy can’t hold in her emotions anymore, and she confronts the Greggs, who dismiss her questions because she’s only a child. They go into the house. Seeing only the injustice of hurting defenseless creatures, Lucy points her Magic Finger at the house, and then runs home.

We see the Greggs in the house, having dinner and getting ready for bed. Nothing seems to have happened. Then we see the ducks circling around and tapping on the window. Something magical is happening, but what? The Greggs think this is odd, but continue what they’re doing. The ducks tap again, forcing Mr. Gregg and William to go outside and see what’s going on. The ducks poo on them – and the Greggs are forced to go back in the house.

Once back inside, William calls Lucy on the phone. She’s not sure she wants to talk to him, but he tells her he’s sorry about his parents being angry, and that he still wants to be her friend. Then he asks if she did her magic, but before she has a chance to answer, her mother tells her to get off the phone. The Greggs get ready for bed. The next morning, the Greggs wake up to find that they’ve shrunk – and now have wings where their arms used to be. They all fly outside and land in the tree. Then they see that the duck family are now human sized, and are going into the house! Not knowing what else to do, the Greggs decide to build a nest, while the ducks discover what it’s like to live in a house.

Lucy begins to get nervous at what chaos her Magic Finger might have created, and tries to phone William. When a duck answers instead, she sneaks out of her house and rushes to the farm. William tries to make the best of it, telling Lucy that it’s fun to fly, but asks her if she thinks they’ll be stuck like that forever. Lucy reminds him that their teacher is still a cat, and she promises she’ll try to think of something. The Greggs have a rough night in the tree, and the next morning, the Ducks come out of the house holding the shotguns. They aim the guns at the Greggs, wanting revenge for killing their children. Lucy arrives just in time to stop the ducks and helps everyone come to an agreement. The Greggs promise never to hunt any animal again and amazingly, the magic reverses and everyone is back to normal. Lucy is about to tell us the rest of the story, when Mr. Gregg, who has renamed himself Mr. Egg, comes out of the house, on his way to smash the guns. Mrs. Gregg decides to give the dead ducks a proper funeral. William and Lucy decide to feed their new friends, and the stage fills with birds as the show ends.

**Puppets are an important element in The Magic Finger.** Through the magic of theatre, puppets are a great device to use to make it “believable” when the Greggs are turned into birds. We also use puppets to portray the ducks before and after they become human size. The actors playing the Gregg family manipulate the puppets so they are still playing the same characters. It takes special skill and breathing techniques to bring life into a puppet and make it believable. In the show, we use rod puppets, but there are many different kinds of puppets you can make, if you want to try to see what it’s like. An easy and fun puppet you can make at home is a sock puppet. Get an old pair of above the ankle socks, different colors of yarn, google-y eyes or buttons and some glue. Place the sock over your hand and create a mouth by separating your thumb and fingers. Once you like the position of your sock puppet you can begin to add hair, eyes, lips and just about anything else you’d like to! Then give your puppet personality. How does it breathe? What kind of voice does it have? How does it interact with other puppets or with human people?
**About the Authors…**

**Roald Dahl** (book author) was a British novelist, short story writer, fighter pilot and screenwriter. His parents were from Norway, but he was born in Wales in 1916. Roald Dahl never went to college, but applied for a job at the Shell Company, because he was sure they would send him abroad. He was sent to East Africa, where he got the adventure he wanted and became a Royal Air Force fighter pilot. In 1942, he went to Washington as Assistant Air Attaché. There, he started writing short stories. In 1943, he published his first children's book *The Gremlins* with Walt Disney and in 1945 his first book of short stories appeared in the US. His collections of short stories have been translated into many languages and have been best-sellers all over the world. Among them are *Someone Like You, Sweet Mystery Of Life, Kiss Kiss,* and *Roald Dahl's Book of Ghost Stories*. Dahl also wrote a TV series called *Tales of the Unexpected* and the novel *My Uncle Oswald*. His stories are known for being mostly fantasy, and are full of imagination. They are always a little cruel, but never without humor - a thrilling mixture of the grotesque and comic. A frequent motif is that people are not what they appear to be. While Roald Dahl dabbled in many mediums, he is best known for his children’s stories such as *James and the Giant Peach, Fantastic Mr. Fox,* and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*. To describe his work Dahl once said, “I make my points by exaggerating wildly. That's the only way to get through to children.” His works have received several awards including the *Edgar Allan Poe Award*, *New England Round Table of Children's Librarians Award*, and the *New York Times Outstanding Books Award*. Roald Dahl died in November 1990. The Times called him "one of the most widely read and influential writers of our generation."

**David Wood** (playwright) is an actor and writer called ‘the National Children's Dramatist’ (the London Times). He co-founded a touring children’s theatre company known as Whirligig Theatre, which for 25 years toured to major theatres nationwide include Sadler’s Wells in London. As a playwright his works are performed worldwide and include *The Gingerbread Man, The Plotters of the Cabbage Patch Corner, Save the Human, The See-Saw Tree,* and *The Ideal Gnome Expedition*. Among his various adaptations David Wood has done many Roald Dahl stories (including *The BFG, The Twits, The Witches,* and *The Magic Finger*), Eric Hill’s *Spot’s Birthday Party*, and the award winning *Tom’s Midnight Garden* from Philippa Pearce’s novel. In 2004 he was appointed an officer for the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to literature and drama in the Queen’s birthday honours. In 2006, he wrote *The Queen’s Handbag*, a play to celebrate the Queen’s 80th birthday. It was performed by an all-star cast in Buckingham Palace Gardens at the Children’s Party at the Palace, and seen live on BBC 1 by 8,000,000 television viewers. David Wood has also led a successful career as an actor, best remembered as Johnny in Lindsay Anderson's film “If...” He is married to Jacqueline Stanbury and they have two grown-up daughters, Katherine and Rebecca.
**Main Characters in the play**

**LUCY** is an 8-year-old girl with special powers. Whenever Lucy sees something unfair, she uses her Magic Finger to stop injustice from occurring. The problem is she can’t really control her Magic Finger, and often the consequences of her actions are bewildering and worrying.

**WILLIAM** is impressed with Lucy’s powers, but also just wants to be her friend. He thinks flying like a bird is a huge adventure, but when he realizes there is real danger, he convinces his parents to apologize to the ducks.

**MRS. WINTER** is William and Lucy’s no-nonsense schoolteacher who was magically turned into a Cat by Lucy’s Magic Finger.

**MR. GREGG** is William’s Father. He likes the way things are, and sees no need to change. But he proves resourceful at building a nest, and when he’s convinced not to shoot the ducks, he embraces his new idea with gusto.

**MRS. GREGG** is a farmer’s wife, and William’s mother. She is by all accounts a good mother who wants to do what’s best for her family.

**THE DUCK FAMILY** are transformed into human-size as a result of Lucy’s Magic Finger.

### BRITISH AND AMERICAN SYNONYMS as found in the play

Even though we speak the same language, there are many words which are different in the U.S. and in England. In our production of the *Magic Finger*, the actors use a British dialect—and some words that you might not recognize. Here are some examples: on the left are examples of British English and on the right is their American Synonyms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>British English</th>
<th>American English</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cross</td>
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<td>Chips</td>
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<td>Biscuits</td>
<td>Cookies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubbish</td>
<td>Trash</td>
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<td>Mum</td>
<td>Mom</td>
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### Did you know ...

...that the MainStreet Theatre Company has a Facebook page?

You are welcome to post your questions about the play, and we will answer them! Or, if you don’t need answers, just send us letters letting us know what you thought!

Sign up for the “MainStreet Scoop” to get e-mail updates about all things going on at MainStreet! [www.facebook.com/MainStreetTheatreCompany](http://www.facebook.com/MainStreetTheatreCompany)
**Discussion Questions:**

**Working out problems:** Lucy lets her anger control her actions sometimes, and she discovers that using her Magic Finger can have real consequences. At the end of the play, she and William decide there is a better way to solve problems than using magic, or fighting. Have you ever let your anger get the best of you? What are some ways to work out problems when you’re angry?

**Animal Rights:** In the play, when Lucy gets upset, it is usually because an animal is in danger or is being mistreated. As they cannot speak for themselves, she tries to stick up for them the only way she knows how, by using her magic finger. How do you treat animals? Discuss ways that you can respect animals and keep them out of danger.

**Sometimes things change...** After the Greggs are turned into birds and are living in the tree, they are confused and unhappy at their changed circumstances. William decides to be happy about being a bird, and shows Lucy that there are good things about it, like being able to fly! Has there ever been a time where your life suddenly changed? How did you deal with it? Think and talk about some ways to look at the bright side of new or confusing situations.

**A New Perspective.** Instead of being the hunters, The Greggs become the hunted animals when the giant ducks threaten to shoot them. The family is forced to think about things they’ve always done- like shooting ducks- from a brand new perspective. Have you ever been forced to look at an argument from somebody else’s point of view? How can that new perspective change your opinion?

**Using the Play in the Classroom**

**Transformation:** In the story, the Greggs are turned into birds because they shoot ducks, and Mrs. Winter turns into a cat. Imagine that you are turned into an animal. What would you need to know in order to survive? Have students take turns answering questions from the rest of the class about their animal. (Speaking and Listening Standards: Ask and answer questions in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue). Add to this project by drawing a picture of you as the animal.

**Building a Nest:** After the Greggs turn into birds, they must build a nest to live in! What kinds of things can be used to build a nest? Break the class into groups, and have each group research a different bird and how it builds its nest. Each group should then write a short report, and present their findings to the rest of the class. (Writing Standards: Participate in shared research and writing projects) Add to this project by drawing pictures of the birds.

**Building a Nest, part 2:** Now that you’ve learned about nests, turn it into an art project. Find twigs, leaves and other objects and have the class try to create their own nests. Since you’re not a bird, feel free to experiment with a variety of objects. How does your nest express your personality? (Creative Expression)

**Home, Sweet Home:** In the play, the Gregg’s House is made up of 2 platforms broken up into 4 rooms. Before the real “house” could be built, the show’s scenic designer drew the house in “scale” – where 1/2” equaled 1 foot. Have students draw their own simple houses – using ½ inch scale. They should use their knowledge of shapes, lines and angles. (Math standards: measurements and data/geometry).

**Write a review** of the play, describing the scenery, lighting, music, costumes, and performers.

How did the scenery help you to know which location each scene took place? How was the school room different from the Gregg’s farm, for example?

What was your favorite part of the play and why? Can you draw a picture of it?
**MainStreet’s 5-Minute Homemade Ice Cream:**

This is the perfect ice cream to whip up on a hot summers day! Mrs. Gregg makes apple ice cream in *The Magic Finger*, but we recommend making vanilla ice cream to eat with your apples. Maybe you can try it and feed your whole family dessert, just like Mrs. Gregg!

**Ingredients:**
1/2 cup whole milk or cream (you can use 1 or 2% milk, but you will get some crystallization due to the water content)
1 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla extract
6 tbsp. Kosher salt
2 cups ice

**Supplies:**
1 quart size zip top bag
1 sandwich size zip top bag

**Directions:**
1. In the sandwich size zip top bag combine the milk, sugar, and vanilla extract and seal the bag tightly. In the quart size bag add the ice and kosher salt. Place the smaller bag into the larger bag and seal the larger bag tightly.

2. Now for the fun part! Shake the bag as hard as you can (without popping it open) until it becomes the consistency of ice cream. It should take about five minutes before the ice cream begins to form, but may take a little longer if you have some slow shakers. Having a dish towel on hand to hold around the bags makes it easier - the ice can make your hands very cold quickly!

3. Serve and enjoy! You can also add other fixings into your ice cream such as fruit or candy. The above recipe makes one serving, but you can double the recipe if you want to make it for two. It’s always fun to let each child shake their own ice cream!

Read more at: [http://parentables.howstuffworks.com/chow/make-your-own-ice-cream-five-minutes.html](http://parentables.howstuffworks.com/chow/make-your-own-ice-cream-five-minutes.html)

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**Theatre Games:**

- **Speaking Like a Duck:** In the play, the ducks, the dog, and even Mrs. Winter communicate by “speaking” in animal voices. Try doing some improvisations in “duck” and see how you communicate. Set up a scene where something exciting has happened, but one person can only speak in duck quacks. Here’s an example: tell the “duck” that he or she and a friend were in a hot air balloon when suddenly the rope broke loose and you start to fly away! Have the duck describe the situation. Then have the rest of the group ask questions. Is it easy to understand the answers? After a few minutes, switch to a new “duck”. Choose a different scenario for each new duck! (Fun fact: Actors auditioning for these roles had to do an improvisation just like this before they were offered the part! It isn’t as easy as it looks.)

- **Explore The Environment** When the Greggs are first turned into birds, they start to explore their farm as though they’ve never seen it before! Using the teacher or a student as the leader, have students explore the classroom. Have everyone walk around the space and look at everything there is. Once the space has been fully explored – have the leader change the environment! (It’s optional to use a Magic Finger to do it!). Describe the new space, and have students use their imaginations to react to their new situation. What if you’re in the Arctic and the cold wind is blowing? Is there snow? How does that affect how you walk or breathe? Continue to alter the setting, environment, temperature, situation, etc. What happens if you’re no longer human? If you’re a dog, do you use your senses differently? How do you walk differently? The exploration opportunities are endless, and it’s a great way to loosen up a group.
BEHIND THE SCENES—

The Magic Finger
A Resource Guide for Teachers and Parents

FROM THE STAGE TO THE PAGE … @ THE RANCHO CUCAMONGA LIBRARIES

Books serve as inspiration for our imagination, hearts, and for this theatre performance! The library is great place for families to continue their theatre experience. Families can choose from all kind of materials including: books, audio books, CDs, magazines, and other materials. Come visit the award winning Rancho Cucamonga Libraries for all of your learning and entertainment needs!

LIBRARY TOUR INFORMATION

As part of your class visit to the Lewis Family Playhouse, why not take a tour of the Paul A. Biane Library?

Show your students about the wonderful, free resources they have access to, and exciting library programming. The Paul A. Biane Library facility has over 100,000 volumes housed in a beautiful, 23,000 square foot facility.

Among the facility’s unique features: a story theatre with a star ceiling made of fiber optic lights, 20 seat technology center, teen study area, and a special performing arts collection.

The Paul A. Biane Library at Victoria Gardens has over 1,000 books and media in the Performing Arts collections for Adults and Children.

Pre- and post- show tours last approximately 15 minutes and are scheduled on a first come, first served basis. To arrange a tour, please call Lorena Paz, Library Assistant, at (909) 477-2720 ext. 5059.

PROGRAMS AND FAMILY FUN @ THE RANCHO CUCAMONGA LIBRARIES

The Rancho Cucamonga Libraries offer a full calendar of entertaining, enriching and informative programs for the whole family.

- Weekly story times
- Cultural Arts Nights
  - “Asian & Pacific Islander Cultural Arts Night”
    Fri. May 16th 7-9 pm
  - “Star Wars Day”
    Sat. May 24th 1-4 pm
- Technology classes
- Summer Reading Program beginning May 31st

BOOKS @ THE LIBRARY

If you liked The Magic Finger, you’ll love these!

- The Magic Touch Shelved under J Fic Catling
- George’s Marvelous Medicine Shelved under J Fic Dahl
- The Witches Shelved under J Fic Dahl
- Magic Kids: The Strongest Girl in the World and the Invisible Boy Shelved under J Fic Gardner
- The Power of Poppy Pendle Shelved under J Fic Lowe
- Wild Robert Shelved under J Fic Jones

If you have any questions about finding these books or about the library, please call the reference desk at (909) 477-2720.

This Curriculum guide was prepared by the staff of the Lewis Family Playhouse. Library information compiled by Library staff. For questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Mireya “Murry” Hepner at (909) 477-2775 ext. 3734.