






THEATRE ETIQUETTE


A live performance is a unique experience shared between performers and the audience. Unlike television or movies, the actors on stage can hear noise from the audience. So, as a courtesy to the performers and the others around you, please review the following information with your class and chaperones before attending a performance.


 Do not bring any food, drink, candy or gum with you into the theatre.


 Walk in the theatre and use the railings as you are using the stairs.

 Ushers can help you find your seats or direct you to the restrooms.


 Once you are in your seat, you may talk quietly until the performance begins.


 Keep your feet off the seats and do not step over seat backs.


 Do not lean over balcony railings or attempt to throw or drop anything from the balconies.


 Turn off or silence all cell phones, pagers, beepers and beeping watches before the performance begins.

 Photography, video recording and audio recording are not allowed in the theater.

 When the lights dim for the performance to begin, stop talking, turn your attention to the stage and enjoy the show.

 Stay in your seat during the performance.

 During the performance listen and watch closely. A live performance is not a video that you can rewind if you miss something.

 At the end of the performance, thank the performers by applauding. In return, they will thank you with a bow as you applaud.

 As you exit the theatre, remember to walk and stay with your group.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: The BAD Audience Member!

A fun way to review theater etiquette with your students is to have them point out bad audience behavior during a show. Here's one way to illustrate this concept:

1. Have one or two students come up to the front of the room and present something to the class. They can tell a story, present an oral report, or tell some jokes – it doesn't matter what they present; the important thing is that they are the "actors" and the class is the audience.
2. Once they are into the activity, you (the teacher) leave the room and then re-enter. Enter loudly, chew gum, step on people's feet, talk to them, etc. Be the worst audience member you can possibly be. Find a seat and continue to talk to others, ask what's going on in the performance, take pictures, talk on your cell phone etc.
3. Afterward, ask the class to list all the bad behavior. Write these on the board. Include coming in late, talking, gum chewing, waving to friends, etc.
4. Then ask the audience members how they felt when the bad audience member came into the theatre. Could they hear the actors? Were they distracted? And finally ask the actors how they felt. Could they concentrate on their performance? They may have ended up listening to you instead of continuing with their presentation!

The important goal of this activity is for students to actively see and feel what it's like to have someone disrupt their theatre experience, both from the performer and the audience side of the stage.

After you come back from seeing the show at the Hennepin Theatre District, review the experience with your students. Were they "good" or "bad" audience members? How was the experience of watching the show given their behavior?