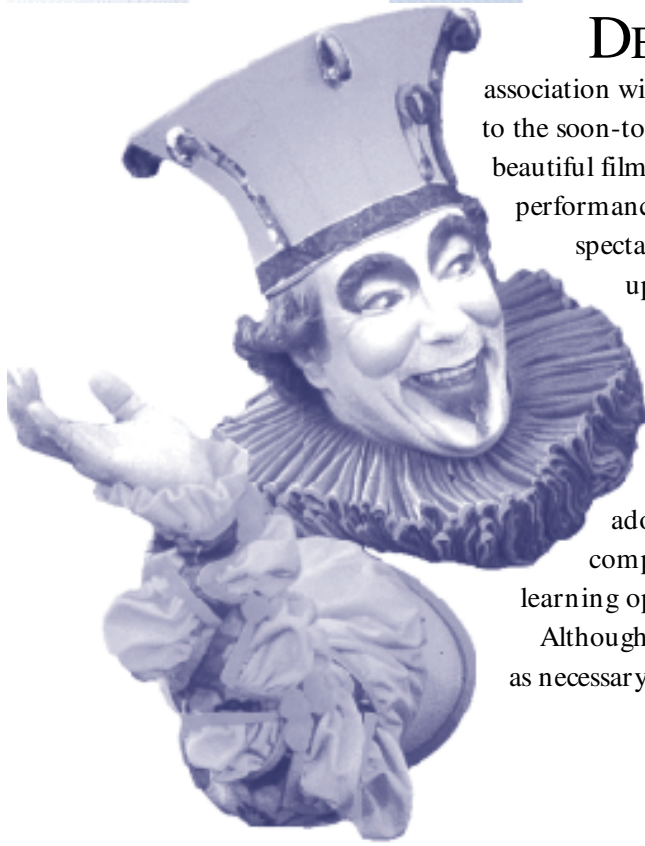




# CIRQUE DU SOLEIL™ JOURNEY OF MAN



**DEAR EDUCATOR:** Youth Media International (YMI), in association with Sony Pictures Classics, is pleased to present this educational guide to the soon-to-be-released film, *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man*. This unique and beautiful film was produced with the famed Cirque du Soleil™, a non-traditional performance theater that creatively combines circus arts, dance, music and spectacular imagery. Unlike other circuses, Cirque du Soleil relies solely upon the energy and skills of human beings, thus demonstrating through performers' graceful and athletic prowess, man's capabilities throughout life.

Through Cirque du Soleil's incomparable interpretations, *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* tells a story of wonder and excitement as it depicts six stages of life: birth, infancy, childhood, adolescence, adulthood and mature adulthood. The film and this guide complement each other to create multi-cultural and cross-curriculum learning opportunities at a variety of age levels.

Although these materials are copyrighted, you may make as many photocopies as necessary. Please share these activities with other teachers in your school as well.

Roberta Nusim, Publisher

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## FILM SYNOPSIS

The film *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* depicts six stages of life, from infancy through mature adulthood, featuring an amazing variety of performance and sensory media. The story focuses on everyman's journey, the decisions he must make along the way, and how he learns, in the end, that the meaning of life goes beyond wealth and power.

## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To use *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* to foster the development of science, art, communication and writing skills.
- To enhance creative thinking and observation skills.
- To explore values, self-expression and community involvement.

## TARGET AUDIENCE

The materials in this teaching kit may be used with students ages 10-13; however, they may be adapted to suit children of all ages and ability levels.

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Review the written materials and schedule them into classroom lessons. If possible, view the film *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* with your students. The activities may be used without having seen the film, although doing so will deepen students' understanding of the concepts. Use the supplementary suggestions as a springboard to further activities and discussions. Share these materials with other educators.

# ACTIVITY ONE VISION QUEST

- Imagery and perception are important components of the film *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man*. Begin **Part A** by exploring images that are symbols in our society, for example, the triangular arrow that represents recycling. Discuss how symbols represent meanings and objects, and contribute to our understanding of people's lives. Have students list some symbols they find in their homes and communities, as well as different books in which symbolism plays a major role.
- Before having students complete an activity of their choice in **Part B**, discuss how color influences people's actions and feelings (e.g., does the color red imply energy, action and speed?). Have students list their favorite colors, then describe themselves or their world as a color and discuss their reasons for their choice. Older students may want to "create" their own crayon company, name their company's crayon colors, and write an ad for their product.
- A simple way to illustrate one's journey through life is through photos. Have students complete the suggested activities at home in **Part C**, then bring in baby pictures of themselves and post them on a bulletin board. Then have classmates try to guess which photo belongs to which student. They could also make a photo autobiography or a pictorial representation of their life through images of favorite objects or places they've known.

# ACTIVITY TWO SOUNDS LIKE FUN

- Have your students go on a scavenger hunt to find items in the classroom relating to each of their five senses. After identifying these items, discuss the impact that each sense has upon our lives. Then have students complete **Part A** of this activity.
- You may wish to begin **Part B** of this activity by discussing Canada, the place of origin of the Cirque du Soleil, and its wealth of Native North American folklore. It might be helpful to read a selection from *The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese and Other Tales of the Far North* (see the resources listing). Then have students create and perform a story either individually or as a class.
- The Flounes in *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* are symbolic of life's guiding instincts. Using the masks students create as Flounes in **Part C** of this activity, have the class perform a skit or play demonstrating the conflicts involved in decision-making. For example, how would students resolve a conflict between the opportunity to see their favorite band play their final concert from tenth-row center seats, versus attending their favorite relative's milestone 100th birthday? As a springboard to a lesson or unit about the performing arts, ask students to discuss the use of masks in role-playing in real life and in the theater.

# SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY IDEAS

These suggestions can be tailored to your students' abilities and interests, as well as the curriculum area of your choice.

**Art History**—Study Henri Matisse's use of magnificent colors in his paintings and cut-outs.

**Geography**—Have students learn about Canada and its French-speaking regions.

**History**—Study circus origins and how Cirque du Soleil differs from the typical circus.

**Music**—Have students paint interpretations of Beethoven's music using vibrant colors and abstract symbolism.

**Physical Education**—Have students choreograph a dance.

**Science**—Study vision and color. Examine the colors and appearance of rainbows.

**Science**—Study how impairment of one of the senses may contribute to heightened awareness of a different sense.

**Social Studies**—Invite a storyteller to your classroom and have students create a different ending for the tale that is told.

## Reviewers

- Marilyn Johnson, OMSI (Oregon Museum of Science and Industry)
- Diana Payne, The Maritime Center, Norwalk, Conn.
- Kathleen Smith, Cultural Education Collaborative, Charlotte, N.C.



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# ACTIVITY ONE VISION QUEST

**Part A.** The film *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* presents universal themes of life. Although the narrator is a mature adult who speaks of his own life, his story is actually that of all people. It is a dramatic tale, illustrated by the beauty and strength of the performers known as Cirque du Soleil. Magnificent colors are an important feature of the film; through spectacular imagery we are challenged to question our points of view.

Symbols are objects that represent other objects. *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man* uses clowns and a spider-like creature as just some of the colorful characters that symbolically communicate the story. A symbol requires imagination—first, in its creation, and second, in its interpretation. Describe symbol(s) that you would use to represent yourself—consider colors, music, food, clothing, etc., for your choices of symbolism:

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**Part B.** Light is a form of energy that is made up of colors perceived by the eye which, like a camera, controls and focuses the light to form images. Do you experience certain moods and feelings when you see certain colors? Can you communicate them to others? In this activity, complete one of the following topics using a separate sheet of paper:

1) You are an alien from the planet Colormanica. While traveling through the universe to scout out new colors, you lose your way and find yourself in a classroom filled



with humans your own age. Imagine that you are asked to teach these humans about new colors they've never seen. First, use words to describe a color of your choice and to convey the color's mood or feeling. Then, make something colorful to show your students the kinds of colors found on your planet. Be as creative as you can!

- 2) You are a famous artist who is exhibiting paintings at a large, well known museum in a city near you. Name an artist who has influenced you the most. Choose three of his or her paintings and tell why you like them. What moods do the choice of colors evoke?
- 3) You are a prize-winning scientist who is an expert in the field of vision. Research the parts of the eye and describe how color is perceived. Then, describe what happens to make a person color-blind.

**Part C.** Think about your own journey through life and how you could most creatively communicate your story. Interview your parents, siblings, grandparents or someone important in your life to gather specific information about your past. Find photographs, letters, or perhaps pictures that you painted. Then assemble a photo collage, videotape a story about yourself, or create a dance or compose a song about your life's journey so far.

## CHECK IT OUT.....

*Bill Nye The Science Guy's Consider The Following*, Disney Press, New York, 1995.  
*Canada, Star of the North*, by Shelley Swanson Sateren, Benchmark Books, New York, 1996.  
*Circus, An Album*, by Linda Granfield, DK Publishing, New York, 1998.  
*Dance*, by Bill T. Jones and Susan Kuklin, Hyperion Books, New York, 1998.  
*Destination Montreal*, by Janice Hamilton, Lerner Publications, Minnesota, 1997.  
*Experiment with Light*, by Bryan Murphy, Lerner Publications Co., Minnesota, 1991.

*Henri Matisse: A Retrospective*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1992.  
*In A Circle Long Ago, A Treasury of Native Lore From North America*, by Nancy Van Laan, Apple Soup Books (Knopf), 1995.  
*Janice VanCleave's 201 Awesome, Magical, Bizarre, & Incredible Experiments*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1994.  
*Janice VanCleave's Astronomy for Every Kid*, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1991.  
*Magic and Perception, The Art and Science of Fooling the Senses*, by Bob Friedhoffer, Franklin Watts, New York, 1996.

*Matisse, An Art Activity Book*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1995.  
*More Magic Tricks, Science Facts*, by Friedhoffer, Franklin Watts, New York, 1990.  
*Raven, A Trickster Tale From The Pacific Northwest*, by Gerald McDermott, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, San Diego, 1993.  
*The Day The Sun Was Stolen*, by Jamie Oliviero, Hyperion Books, New York, 1995.  
*The Girl Who Dreamed Only Geese and Other Tales of the Far North*, told by Howard Norman, Gulliver Books, San Diego, 1997.



# ACTIVITY TWO SOUNDS LIKE FUN

## Part A. *Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man*

begins and ends with the loud rhythmic beating of drums. It is an intense, primitive and steady beat that reminds us of our origins—the heartbeat of creation. We hear this beat with our ears, but we can also feel it with our bodies. Consider the five senses: sight, sound, taste, touch and smell. Through our senses, we are able to experience the world with ability and openness. All of us have different skills and abilities—some people excel in sports, while others are accomplished in art.

**What skills do you have, or what skills would you like to develop? List them below.**

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**What senses would be used with these skills?**

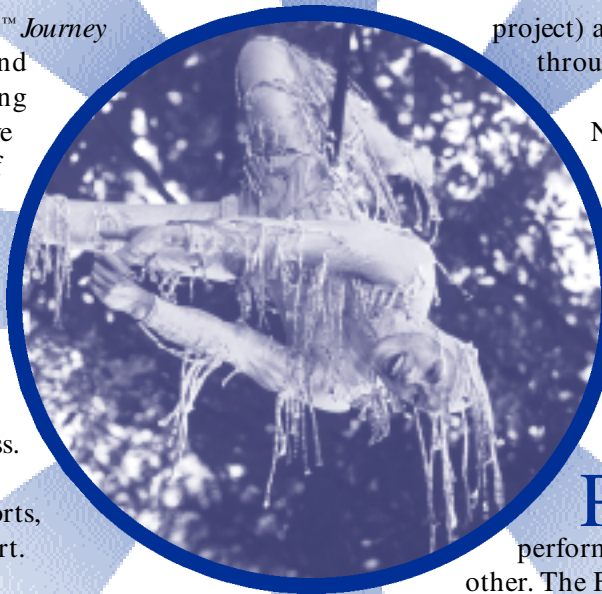
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Now, be absolutely quiet for two minutes. What physical sensations are you aware of? On the other side of this paper, describe which sense you feel is the most important to you, and why. How would you cope if you lost this sense?

**Part B.** Cirque du Soleil, based in Montreal, originated in Canada in 1984. This troupe of artists communicates stories through fantastical performances that include mime, acrobatics, dance, theater, music and a variety of other arts and sciences. It is a circus unlike any other because it harnesses the energy, strength and imagination of people.

Think of a story that you would like to tell. It can be fact or fiction, an old folktale or one that you create yourself. Learn your story (or your part of the story if it is a class



project) and then tell it to your classmates through mime and movement.

Now you are the observer and listener. After one of your classmates has told his or her story or part of the class story, draw some of the images and write some of the words that came to mind. Share your results with your classmates.

## Part C. *In Cirque du Soleil™ Journey of Man*

the performers trust and depend upon each other. The Flounes (clowns) Paul and Josette have different instincts that complement one another. Floune Paul is the confident risk-taker. He has enormous energy and is willing to try anything. Floune Josette is intelligent and thoughtful. She considers her choices carefully before deciding to act. The Flounes accompany the child in the film on his journey, balancing each other and subtly exerting their influence.

**Which Floune is most like you?**

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Make two masks of Flounes you would like to accompany you on your journey through life. Use them to create a skit or play with your classmates to show the conflicts involved in decision-making.

**Now identify a recent conflict in your life. How did you resolve it? Were you “true” to the instincts of the Floune most like you? Describe the situation below:**

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Are there other kinds of masks people wear to hide themselves, such as surgical masks? Think of some and write them on the back of this sheet of paper.