

2010–2011 Season

PLAYGUIDE

It's A Wonderful Life: A Live Radio Play

November 23–December 12, 2010
Studio One, Riffe Center

Adapted by Joe Landry



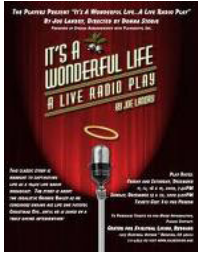
The Story

You see, George, you really had a wonderful life. Don't you see what a mistake it would be to throw it all away? –Clarence Oddbody A-S-2

Tune into the 1940's radio broadcast of *It's a Wonderful Life* performed live on the CATCO- Phoenix Theatre stage. Watch five actors play multiple character roles as this timeless tale comes to life. Experience the story of idealistic George Bailey as he struggles to cope with misfortune and considers ending his life one fateful Christmas Eve. Meet his guardian angel Clarence Oddbody who teaches him to appreciate the rich qualities of compassion and caring that have recently lain dormant within his heart. Clarence helps George realize the lives he has touched and the people he has helped throughout his existence. That very day, George awakens to find that regardless of the hardship he's faced, he has a wonderful life. Join us on the heartfelt journey of this beloved American holiday classic.

CATCO  **THEATRE**

About the Playwright



Joe Landry first took interest in film by working in his home town library's film department at age twelve. Landry not only enjoyed working in the world of film, but actively pursued his love of theatre as well. He has worked for theatre companies such as Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Westport Country Playhouse, and many others. Landry created his own company called Second Guess Theatre Company that opened in 1995. Soon after, Landry's created the stage version of *It's a Wonderful Life* which blossomed from an adaptation he wrote for his friend's high school ensemble. Due to the high cost of producing the full length movie as a play, Landry eventually decided to transform the piece into a radio play. In 1997, Landry premiered the *It's a Wonderful Life* radio play in Stamford, Connecticut. The production quickly gained popularity, touching the hearts of people all around the country.

Reading Recommendations

It's a Wonderful Life is based on a short story called *The Greatest Gift* written by Philip Van Doren Stern. One of the themes of this short story and the radio play of *It's a Wonderful Life* is celebrating the gift of life. Look below for picture books that share this common theme.

- Giving Thanks* by Jonathan London
- The Secret of Saying Thanks* by Douglas Wood
- I Like Where I Am* by Jessica Harper
- And Here's to You* by David Elliott



Movie Recommendations



Find your favorite movie classic below to enjoy this holiday season. What do these movies share in common with *It's A Wonderful Life*? How are these movies different?

- Scrooge*
- A Christmas Carol*
- White Christmas*
- Miracle on 34th Street*
- Holiday Inn*

Curriculum Connections

You can use this Playguide and your visit to CATCO-Phoenix Theatre to help your students meet the curriculum standards required in schools by the Ohio Department of Education. Look throughout our Playguide for the icon

Curriculum Connection

and you will find academic standards that correspond with the different activities listed.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO

Before the Show

1. Before attending the radio play *It's a Wonderful Life*, watch the movie version of this holiday classic. In the movie, George develops a profound appreciation for life through the help of Clarence, his guardian angel. Clarence has a tremendous impact on how George lives the rest of his life. Write about someone who has positively impacted your life. What did you learn from this person? How did they change your life?

Curriculum Connection

English Language Arts: Literary Text Standard

Benchmark E: Demonstrate comprehension by inferring themes, patterns, and symbols. (4–7)



2. *I'm shaking the dust of this crummy little town off my feet and I'm going to see the world. Italy, Greece, and the Parthenon, the Colosseum.*

George Bailey's dream is to travel the world. Where would you like to go if you could travel anywhere in North America? Research two places you would like to visit in North America. Collect information about the practices and products of the various cultural groups in the two places you chose to study. Compare their food, clothing, shelter, language, religion, and artistic expression.

Curriculum Connection

Social Studies: People in Societies

Benchmark B. Compare practices and products of North American Cultural groups. (3–5)

3. George Bailey's brother Harry becomes a fighter pilot soon after the eruption of World War II. What events took place during World War I that lead to the start of World War II? What countries were involved in World War II? Research World War II at your local library. Once you compile your research, imagine that you are Harry writing to your brother George while you are away at war. Use the information that you research to write your letter.

Curriculum Connection

Language Arts Standards

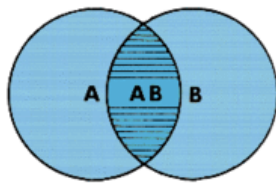
Benchmark C: Write formal and informal letters that include important details and follow correct letter format. (3–4)

Curriculum Connection

Social Studies: History

Benchmark D: Connect developments related to World War I with the onset of World War II. (9–10)

After the Show



1. You now have seen the radio play of *It's a Wonderful Life*. How is the radio play different from the movie version of the story? Writers can tell a story through live theatre, film, and radio. How is the writing or dialogue of the radio play *It's a Wonderful Life* the same as the movie? How is it different? Compare and contrast the differences between the radio play of *It's a Wonderful Life* and the movie. Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast your thoughts.

Curriculum Connection

English Language Arts: Reading Process: Concepts of Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies

Benchmark D: Apply reading skills and strategies to summarize and compare and contrast information in text, between text, and across subject areas. (K-3)

2. As you know, the version of *It's a Wonderful Life* that you saw is a radio play. During the 1930s and 1940s, listening to radio was at its peak. Twenty-two million American homes had radios! People during that time did not watch TV like we do today. Instead, friends and family huddled around the radio listening to music, variety shows, dramas, and comedies. How is writing a script for radio different than writing a script for film? How is writing a script for radio different than writing a script for a play? In the radio play *It's a Wonderful Life*, the playwright added funny commercials to the script. Work with a friend to write your own goofy radio commercial. Perform the commercial for your family and friends!

Curriculum Connection

Drama/ Theatre: Historical, Cultural, and Social Contexts

Benchmark C: Explain the role of writers in creating live theatre, film/video, and broadcast media. (K-4)

Imagine you are a reporter from *The Columbus Dispatch* that came to review *It's a Wonderful Life*. What would you say about the show? What was your favorite part of the performance? Which character did you like the most? What did you think of the setting of the story? What did you think of the playwright's interpretation of the story? How did the lighting, costumes, and set add to your overall viewing experience? How did the actors use sound effects to tell the story? What theatrical vocabulary can you use to respond to the show? Write a short newspaper article reviewing the show. Create a headline and draw a picture of your favorite part.

Curriculum Connection

Drama/ Theatre: Analyzing and Responding Standard

Benchmark A: Use dramatic/theatrical vocabulary and concepts in responding to dramatic/theatrical experiences. (K-4)

Curriculum Connection

Drama/ Theatre: Creative Expression and Communication

Benchmark B: Explain the functions of interrelated nature of scenery, props, lighting, sound, costumes, and makeup to create an environment appropriate for drama. (5)

VOCABULARY



Here are some words and phrases from the radio play *It's a Wonderful Life*. How many of these words do you know? Look up words you don't know, and think of a way to use them in a sentence of your own.

"Yes, sir. They have **diphtheria** there, haven't they sir."

"Oh, I had another **tussle** with old Henry Potter today."

"It's all because of a few starry eyed dreamers like Peter Bailey stir them up and fill their heads with a lot of impossible **hooley**."

"You got the **telegram**, and you're upset."

"It's purely **mercenary**."

"I've guaranteed the band sufficient **funds** to meet their needs."

"Now what are we going to do, **foreclose** on him?"

"I'd say you are nothing but a **scurvy** little spider."

"Come to the bank and deposit some more **loot**."

**Curriculum
Connection**

English Language Arts: Acquisition of Vocabulary

Benchmark A: Use context clues to determine the meaning of new vocabulary. (K-7)

GEORGE BAILEY'S CRAFT CORNER

Bell Craft



"Look daddy. Teacher says every time a bell rings an angel gets his wings."

Materials:

- Plastic, paper, or foam cup
- 1 gold pipe-cleaner
- 1 medium gold pom pom
- 1 white small plastic bead
- Scissors
- White craft glue
- Paint, markers, or foil

Instructions:

1. Fold pipe-cleaner in half and thread on the white small plastic bead. Stop the bead leaving about a 1.5" loop.
2. Very carefully, poke or cut a small hole in the top of the upside down cup. Thread the pipe-cleaner into the hole. It should stop when the small plastic bead hits the hole. Secure with glue.
3. At the other end of the pipe-cleaner, fold one of the sides up into the cup so it cannot be seen. Glue the gold pom pom to the end of the visible pipe-cleaner. You may have to hold this in a place for a minute or two until the glue begins to grab.
4. Decorate the outside of the cup with makers, paint, or foil as you desire.



This craft was provided by the crafts caboose website. View the website to see the finished product. <http://crafts.kaboose.com/symbols-of-christmas-bell.html>