



**Curious
George: The
Golden
Meatball**

**Book and Lyrics by
Jeremy Desmon
Original Music by
John Kavanaugh
Based on the book series by Margaret & H.A. Rey**

**And the play owned by Universal Stage
Productions**

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Table of Contents:

Teacher introduction and Background:.....	Page 3
Authors Background:.....	Page 4
Lyricist and Book Writer Background:.....	Page 5
Activity: Being Curious is a Balancing Act:.....	Page 6
Activity: Making A Chef's Hat:.....	Page 7
Activity: The Golden Meatball Contest:.....	Page 8
Activity: Studying Italy:.....	Page 9
Activity: Curious George has got Rhythm:.....	Page 10
Activity: Coloring Curious George:.....	Page 11
Activity: Inspiring Curiosity:.....	Page 12
Monkey See, Monkey Do:.....	Page 13
Theatre Etiquette:.....	Page 14

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students theatre experience with the musical, CURIIOUS GEORGE :THE GOLDEN MEATBALL as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long lasting. Our study guide provides discussion topics, as well as related activities. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion.

We hope you enjoy the show!

Background

Our musical is based on the CURIIOUS GEORGE book series by Margret and H.A. Rey.

Authors: Margret & Hans Augusto (H.A.) Rey

Hans Augusto Rey was born on September 16, 1898, in Hamburg, Germany. He grew up there near the world-famous Hagenbeck Zoo, and developed a lifelong love for animals and drawing. Margarete Elisabeth Waldstein (who would be known to most of the world as Margret Rey) was also born in Hamburg on May 16, 1906. The two met briefly when Margret was a young girl, before she left Hamburg to study art. They were reunited in 1935 in Rio de Janeiro, where Hans was selling bathtubs as part of a family business and Margret was escaping the political climate in Germany.

Hans and Margret were married in Brazil on August 16, 1935, and they moved to Paris. It was there that Hans published his first children's book, after a French publisher saw his newspaper cartoons of a giraffe and asked him to expand upon them. *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys* (*Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys* in the British and American editions) was the result, and it marked the debut of a mischievous monkey named Curious George.

After *Raffy and the Nine Monkeys* was published, the Reys decided that Curious George deserved a book of his own, so they began work on a manuscript that featured the lovable and exceedingly curious little monkey.

For more information on the Rey's or the creation of Curious George, please visit the official Curious George website at www.curiousgeorge.com.

Book Writer/Lyricist Jeremy Desmon

Jeremy is an award-winning musical theatre book writer whose stories have played to audiences around the world. His musical credits include: The Girl in the Frame, Pump Up The Volume (his adaptation of the 1990 film) and the high-school jukebox musical, Cyrano de BurgerShack as well as touring Universal's Curious George Live!

For more information on Jeremy visit his website at www.jeremydesmon.com

Activity: Being 'Curious' is a Balancing Act



In the musical, Curious George is 'curious' about being a waiter. He decides to practice for the job by carrying a tray of meatballs to see if he can balance them.

- **Try your hand at being a waiter: Stack a tray with blocks or beanbags. Carry the tray with one hand and see how far you can carry it before items start to fall off.**
- **Balancing Act (Group activity): Split the group in half and form two lines. Hand the first person in each line a plastic cup (Dixie Cups work well for this activity). Give each team a bucket full of water. Then place two clear bottles (one for each team) a designated distance away. When the race begins, the first person in each line should walk to the bottle balancing the tray, empty their cup of water into the bottle without bending down, then walk back, balancing the tray and cup. Hand the tray to the next person in line. That person takes the cup, fills it with water and repeats the process. The winning team is the one with the most water in their bottle.**

Activity: Making a Chef's Hat



After experiencing what it's like to be a waiter why not try being a chef? First you'll need a chef's hat.

Materials:

- .. **White tissue paper (2 layers and several sheets)**
- .. **White poster board**
- .. **Scissors**
- .. **Stapler**
- .. **Scotch Tape**

First, wrap the poster board around your head to determine the width of your hat. Make a mark where the poster board meets the other end. Cut off the excess (the long way).

Next, cut a 6-inch wide strip from the poster board to fit around your head. This will be the base of your hat.

Then, fold the tissue paper in ½ inch pleats from one end to the other. You may have to use several sheets to make it long enough to fit around the width of your hat.

Once this is done, staple the pleated tissue paper along the base of your hat. Staple the ends together.

Tape the tissue paper up along the side.

Fold in the top and tape it. Then your hat is finished.

The Golden Meatball Contest



Now that you have your Chef's hat, you can start cooking. In, the musical **CURIOUS GEORGE: THE GOLDEN MEATBALL**, a Golden Meatball Contest is held. Hold your own 'Golden Meatball Contest.' Like a 'Chili Cook off,' have students sign up to make meatballs at home with their family and then bring them to class. Students can sample all of the different meatballs and vote on which one they think tastes the best.

- After the contest, compile all the recipes and put them together in a small cookbook. Students who don't make meatballs can bring in a different dish if they like or a recipe to include in the cookbook.

Activity: Studying Italy



In the musical, Curious George uses the length of his arm to measure distance on the map of Italy. Have students look at a map of Italy and discuss how distance is actually determined.

- ... **Have students research Italy and write down 5 things they didn't know about it. Then have them present their findings to the class.**

- ... **Here are a few other things they can research:**
 - **The population of Italy**
 - **The Capital: Clue - It's mentioned in the musical**
 - **What languages do they speak in Italy?**
 - **What does the Italian flag look like?**

- ... **Next take a look at the history of Pizza. Where did it originate? Was it in Italy or somewhere else?**

- ... **Have students share their favorite toppings with each other.**
 - **Visit a local pizza place and see if they will give a pizza making demonstration. (Most pizza places will do this for a group of students.)**

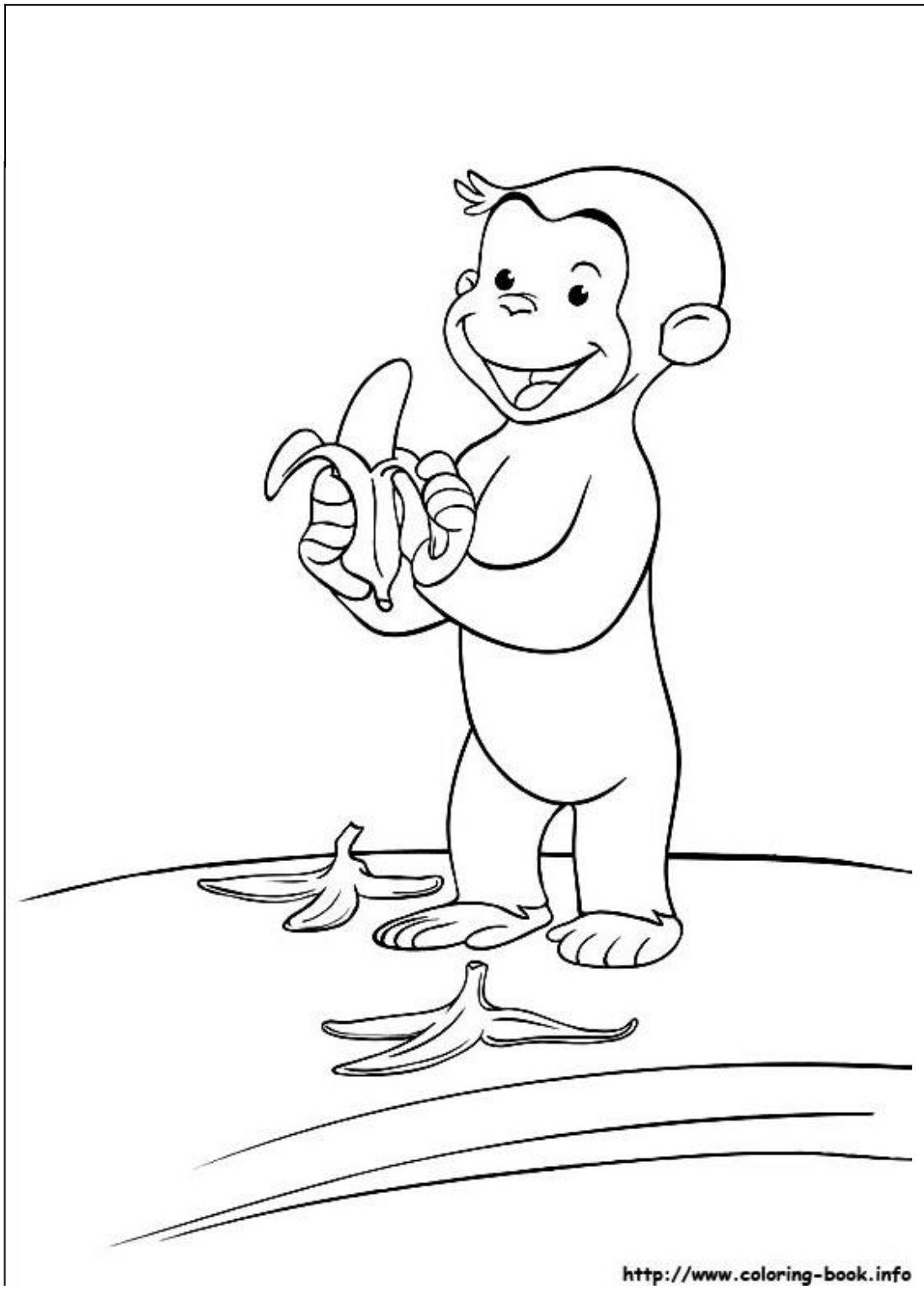
Activity: Curious George has got Rhythm



Bongos are used in the score for the musical, CURIOUS GEORGE: THE GOLDEN MEATBALL. Bring a bongo to class and give students the opportunity to hear the different kinds of sounds that can be played on it.

- .. **Demonstrate the different sounds by using the palm of your hand in the middle of the bongo and then your fingertips on the edge of the drum. How are these sounds different? Then have the students try.**
 - o **If you don't have bongos, students can make them by using two empty oatmeal containers. Using ribbon, tie them together and voila – you have bongos!**
- .. **Experiment with other percussive instruments. For example, the cymbals, the tambourine, and maracas. How are these instruments similar to the bongos? How are they different?**

Activity: Coloring Curious George



Activity: Inspire Curiosity



Curious George gets his name from how curious he is about everything around him. Read Curious George stories in class to inspire a love of reading, which always helps to spark the imagination.

If your curious about how Curious George began – the first book was published in 1939 under the title Cecily G. and the Nine Monkeys. In that story 'Jimmy, the brave Monkey' is standing next to his brother, Fifi. Fifi later became Curious George.

There are roughly 153 Curious George books. Below is a list of a few titles from the Curious George series:

- .. **Curious George and the Rocket**
- .. **Curious George The Perfect Carrot**
- .. **Curious George Rain or Shine**
- .. **Curious George Race Day**
- .. **The Complete Adventures of Curious George**
- .. **Curious George**
- .. **Curious George's First Day of School**
- .. **Curious George Cleans Up**
- .. **Curious George Goes Bowling**

Find other titles visit your local library or check out www.curiousgeorge.com.

ACTIVITY: MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO

If you're curious about Curious George, then you may want to know more about monkeys. Have students research different species of monkeys (there are currently 264 different known monkey species). What do they eat? Where do they live? How long is their lifespan? Then have students share information with the class on the species of monkey they selected. Here are a few other facts to share with students before they start.

- **Apes are not monkeys.**
- **Some monkeys live on the ground, while others live in trees.**
- **Groups of monkeys are known as a 'tribe', 'troop' or 'mission'.**
- **Spider monkeys get their name from their long tail.**

Theatre Etiquette:

We want your students to have the best experience when they see a performance live so below is a list of reminders of how to behave when they see the show.

- Keep in mind that the actors on stage can hear you if you talk, so always be courteous to the actors and other audience members around you by paying attention during the performance and not talking or texting.
- Arrive early. Seeing a show is a special experience and you don't want to miss any of it. 😊
- Remember not to bring any food, beverages or gum into the theatre or where you're seeing the show unless you're told it's okay.
- No taking pictures or recording during the performance.
- Be sure to laugh and applaud when appropriate and remember to have fun!

See you at the show!

