

AN AXIS THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION

34 YEARS OF THOUGHT PROVOKING, AWARD-WINNING CREATIVITY

Artistic Director Wayne Specht

TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE

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king arthur's kitchen



INSIDE:

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- Primary Activity Booklet
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Directed by
Wayne Specht

Written by
Leslie Mildiner

Costume Design
Taryn O'Gorman

Music Composition
Bob Buckley

Set Design
Yvan Morrisette

Props
Heidi Wilkinson

Dance/Movement
Marlise McCormick

Stage Manager
Jethelo Espaldon Cabilete

Cast

CHRIS COOK

GORDON ROBERTS

ASTRID VARNES

AXIS
theatre
Company

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ABOUT AXIS

Over thirty-four years of thought provoking, award-winning creativity have earned Axis Theatre Company a rightful place on the world stage of modern dramatization. Recognized as one of British Columbia's cultural institutions, Axis has produced over 50 original works and has captured the hearts and minds of audiences the world over.



Axis Theatre Company

Wayne Specht
Artistic Director

Kent Martin
General Manager

Heather Cant
Tour Coordinator

Grant Tufts
Systems Manager

Axis Theatre Company is a member of
The Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance,
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the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres,
International Performing Arts for Youth and
The Granville Island Business & Community Association
Axis Theatre Company engages, under the terms of
the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists
who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

ABOUT THE PLAY

King Arthur is celebrating his birthday with the Knights of the Round Table. The king's hard working cook, the kitchen maid and the new-on-the-job scullion (cooks assistant) are beside themselves with excitement and nerves preparing the banquet and especially the birthday cake. Amidst the hustle and bustle of Camelot's basement, the cook regales his bedraggled staff with stories and songs of how young Arthur became king. Using kitchen utensils to represent objects and symbols from Arthur's legendary feats, the trio is magically transported into the stories - and the adventures begin!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leslie Mildiner

Leslie is a Vancouver based writer, actor and director. Credits include the books for the hit stage musicals *All Grown Up* and *Wang Dang Doodle – The Harlem Musical* (Arts Club Theatre) *Debt – The Musical* is being mounted by the Firehall Arts Centre season after next. He also adapted George Orwells' *Coming Up For Air* in an award-winning production starring Bernard Cuffling. Leslie also writes for television and (among others) has contributed to the award-winning animation shows *Yvon of the Yukon*, *What About Mimi?*, *'Omeething Else* and *Class of the Titans*. He recently worked on the upcoming Disney Channel show *Kid vs Kat*.

SPECIAL THANKS

**The Federation of Russian Canadians,
Edward Pederson, Yi-Hsin Lu,
Logan and Sophie Mildiner, Elia Kirby,
Kyle Sutherland, Skai Fowler,
Precious Hutchinson**

COMPANY BIOS

JETHELO ESPALDON CABILETE – STAGE MANAGER

Jethelo is a graduate of Theatre Humber's technical and production program, with an extensive repertoire in stage management and backstage technical work. He has many credits in theatre, concert, and corporate productions, including lighting and stage set-up. He has 11 years of experience working with notable directors, such as Del Surjik, Roy Surette, Stephen Drover, John Wright, Ellie King, and Anthony F. Ingram. Productions: *Playland* (Pacific Theatre), *Skydive* (Realwheels Society), *John & Beatrice* (Pi Theatre/Persephone Theatre Co-production), *doGs* (Theatre Terrific), *The Eighth Land* (Pi Theatre), and *Tuesdays & Sundays* (Dualminds). Special thanks to Keith for his love and support. For my Mother...

CHRIS COOK – PERFORMER

Chris is an actor, director, and writer. He received his theatre training from Concordia University and the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Selected acting credits include Benedick in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Repercussion Theatre), Moritz in *Spring Awakening* (Delinquent Theatre), and Robin in *Robin Hood* (Itsazoo). Writing credits include *You'll Probably Come Back* (Vancouver Fringe Festival, 2010), *Gerty - Live! In Concert!* (BC Buds Festival, 2010), and *Voluntary Nothing* (Walking Fish Festival, 2009). His directing credits include *The Man Who Couldn't Deliver* and *Drinks with Friends* (Vancouver Fringe Festival, 2009).

GORDON ROBERTS - PERFORMER

Gordon is ecstatic to join Axis Theatre Company once again as Merlin and the Cook in the national tour of *King Arthur's Kitchen*.

Gordon moved from Los Angeles twenty years ago. Since then he has performed at the Arts Club (*Evita*, *Rocky Horror Show*), the Playhouse (*Music Man*) and the Chemainus Theatre Festival (*Guys & Dolls*, *Oklahoma*, *My Fair Lady*, *Little Women*) as well as helping to establish the Royal City Musical Theatre company in New Westminster (eleven musicals). He lives in Lynn Valley with his beautiful wife Marni and their two cats Gimlet and Talisker.

ASTRID VARNES – PERFORMER

Astrid Varnes is a Vancouver based actor and writer. She was born in Richmond BC, and studied acting and political science at the University of British Columbia. Past credits include *Burning In* (Gateway Theatre), *The Woods at Tender Creek* (Walking Fish Festival), *Futuristi!* (BellaLuna/UBC), and *Other Freds* (The Only Animal). An original cast member, this is her third tour with *King Arthur's Kitchen*, and she is delighted to be once again cooking up tales with the gang.

WAYNE SPECHT – DIRECTOR

Wayne is the founding Artistic Director of Axis Theatre Company and has, over the last 34 years, performed in, written or directed over 50 of the company's productions. Wayne is one of the creators and original cast members of the legendary *The Number 14* and has directed the show on many occasions over the last 17 years. Wayne was instrumental in developing Axis' newest production *Don Quixote* and the international touring show, *Flying Blind*. Wayne was Artistic Director of the Vancouver International Comedy Festival for five years and is grateful to have received a Lifetime Career Achievement Jessie Award in 2002.

KING ARTHUR'S KITCHEN SYNOPSIS

Cook is busily preparing for King Arthur's birthday feast but he also likes to tell stories and he easily distracts himself and his staff from their tasks. Cook is telling the story of King Arthur's birth when Roderick, the young scullion enters and catches him not working. Cook pretends otherwise and is quick to get to get back to task.

Roderick desperately wants to be a knight but he is clumsy and day dreams a lot. Bronwyn, the kitchen maid is often frustrated with his lack of focus. Cook, Bronwyn and Roderick sing a song together as they begin working again. In Roderick's enthusiasm he accidentally sits on King Arthur's birthday cake! Roderick continues to goof off as they make the soup upsetting Cook. Cook decides that they should work in silence from now on.

Roderick and Bronwyn can't stand the silence – everyone knows that the work goes faster and is more fun when Cook regales them with stories. They manage to convince Cook to tell them a story and he begins where he left off – with King Arthur's birth.

Using kitchen utensils the three workers reenact when King Arthur and his twin sister Morgana La Fey, who is part fairy, are born. A dragon has foretold that Arthur will be the next King of England. Merlin the wizard takes Arthur away to live in secret with Sir Hector and his son Kay. There Arthur will be safe and Merlin can teach him everything he'll need to know to be king.

We next see Arthur as a teenager as Merlin is trying to teach him magic. Arthur just wants to be a knight and is unimpressed with Merlin's magic. He is sure that he can out magic Merlin and in trying to do so he accidentally turns Kay into a frog. A dove appears to Merlin and Arthur and tells them that Arthur's father King Uther is dying and he must return to London right away.

The death of King Uther leaves the throne empty as no one knows that Arthur is his son. Merlin concocts a plan to ensure that Arthur is recognized as the true heir to the throne. Merlin casts a sword into an anvil with magic so that only Arthur will be able to remove it. The sword is inscribed with the words "Who pulleth out this sword of the stone and anvil is rightwise King born of All England!" Many try, but no one is able to pull the sword out. Then one day,

as Kay and Arthur are on their way to a Knight's tournament, Kay realizes that he has forgotten his sword. Arthur runs home to get it but on his way passes where the sword in the stone sits. He pulls the sword from the stone and gives it to Kay.

Arthur is declared King of England. He is reunited with his sister Morgana Le Fay who is jealous of Arthur since she wanted the throne for herself. Morgana Le Fay can do a lot more magic than Arthur because she is half fairy and she begins to use her magic to try to steal the throne from Arthur.

Meanwhile, because Arthur is only a boy many knights have come to challenge him hoping to defeat him in a sword fight and take the throne for themselves. In one such fight, the Sword in the Stone is broken. Merlin takes Arthur to see Nimue the Lady in the Lake who gives him a new sword, Excalibur. Excalibur has special powers that will make sure that Arthur can never be hurt as long as Excalibur is at his side.

King Arthur grows up and marries Guinevere and is given the Round Table as a wedding gift from Guinevere's father. King Arthur develops the Knight of the Round Table. Sir Lancelot is one of those Knights and he and Arthur become good friends.

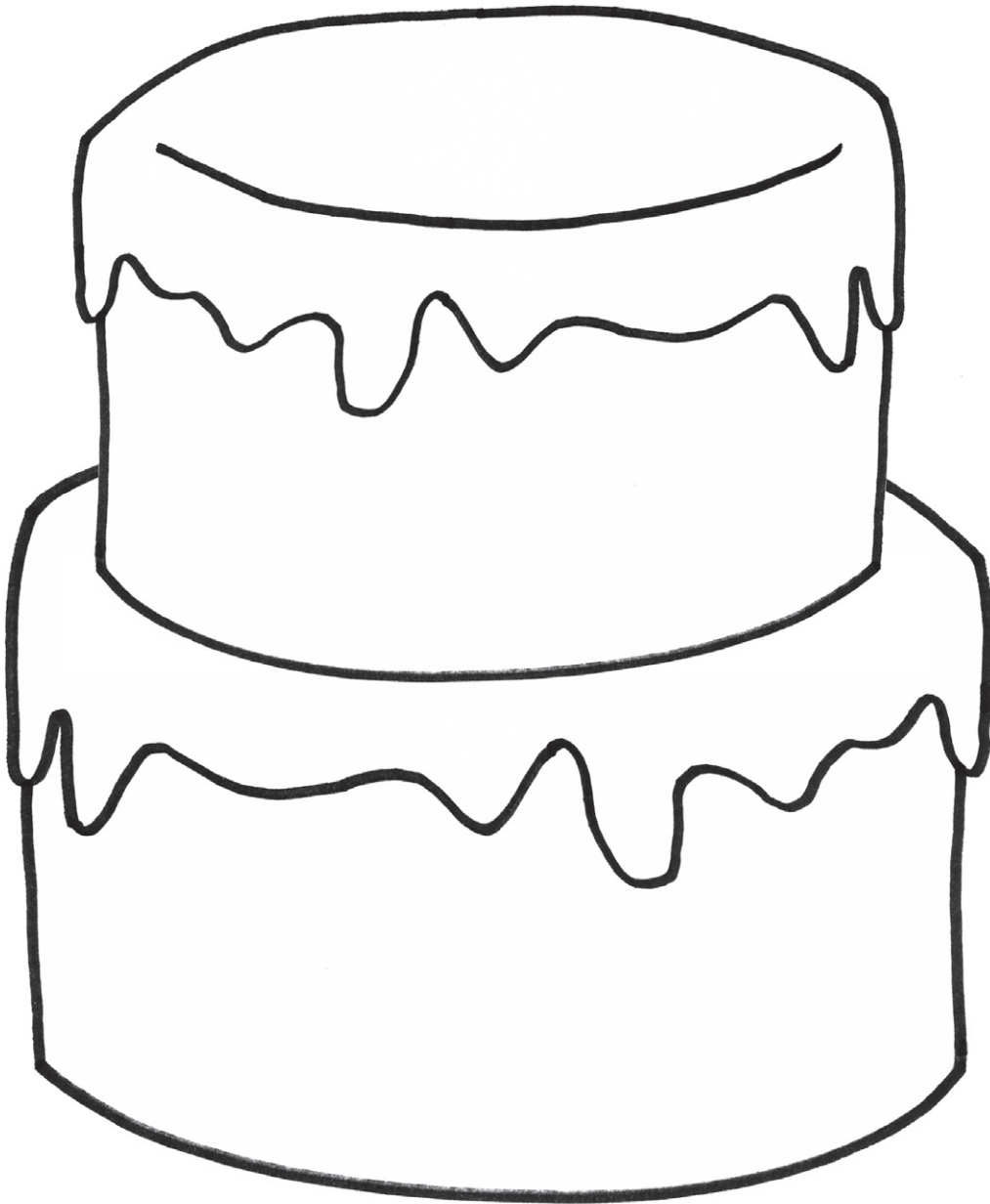
Morgana Le Fay uses her magic to take Excalibur away from Arthur so that he will lose when she makes Sir Lancelot and Arthur fight each other. Morgana's plot to overthrow King Arthur is discovered and she is banished forever from Camelot. From then on King Arthur and his queen ruled the land and people of England prospered.

With the end of the story we are brought back to the kitchen. The birthday feast is coming to an end and the party guests are shouting for the cake. Cook and Bronwyn find the cake in ruins. Everyone was so caught up in the stories they forgot that Roderick sat on the cake. The cake has a knife stuck in it and neither Cook nor Bronwyn can pull it out. They go upstairs to tell King Arthur the bad news. While they are gone, Roderick pulls the knife out and the cake is magically restored to its original state. He runs upstairs to deliver it just in the nick of time. King Arthur is so impressed with Roderick that he makes Roderick a knight on the spot.

king arthur's kitchen

PRIMARY ACTIVITY BOOK

Decorate King Arthur's Birthday Cake!



This Activity booklet belongs to: _____

KING ARTHUR'S KITCHEN PRIMARY ACTIVITY BOOK

① Cook is preparing all kinds of different foods for King Arthur's birthday dinner. Can you connect the names of each food to the right picture?

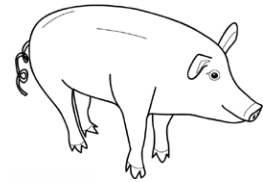
BREAD



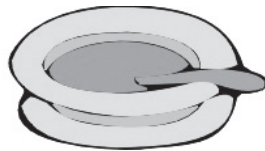
FISH



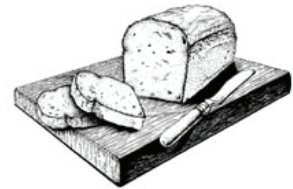
PORRIDGE



PIE



PIG



TURNIP



SOUP



SALAD



CAKE

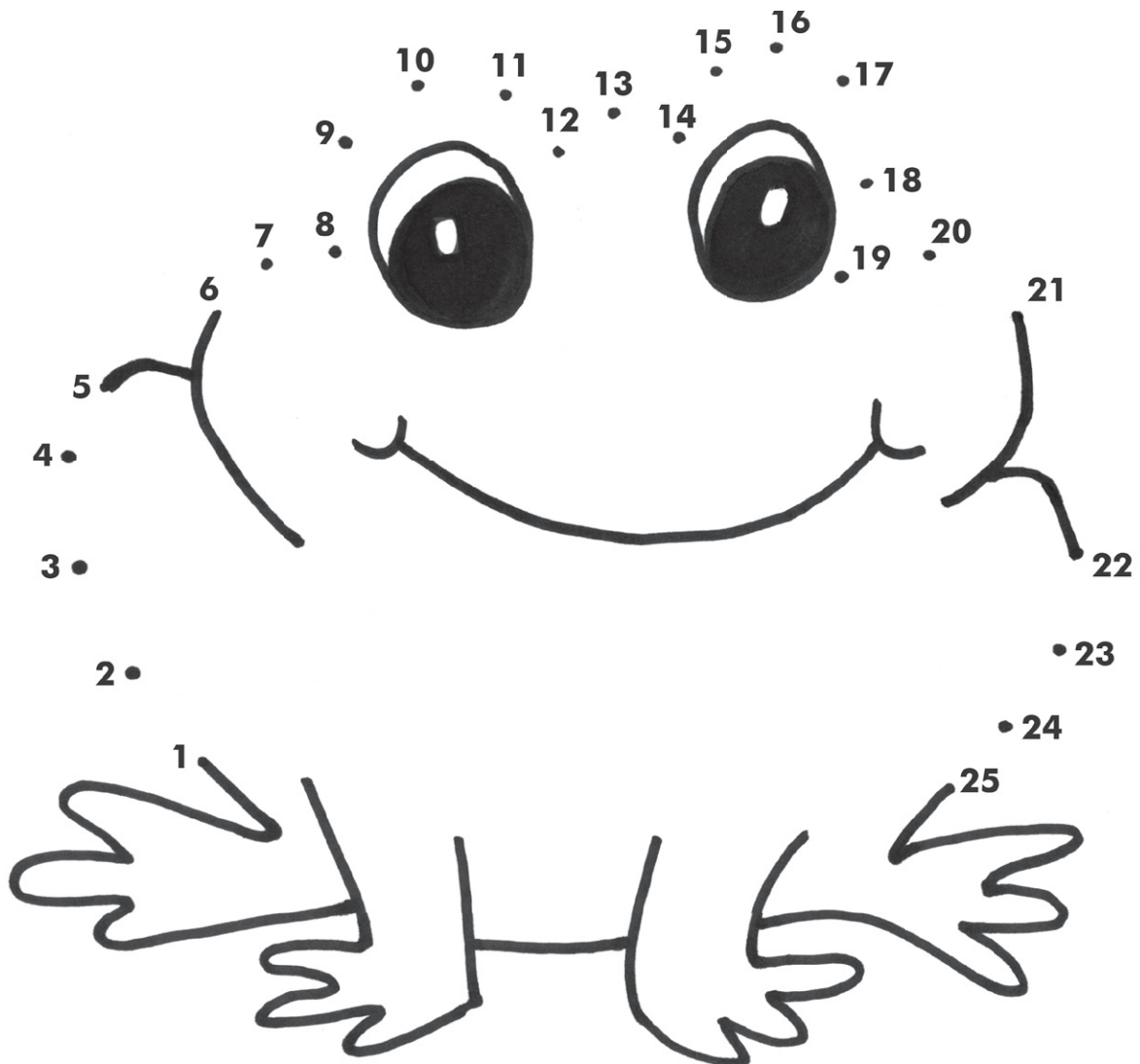


KING ARTHUR'S KITCHEN PRIMARY ACTIVITY BOOK

② How well do you remember what happened in the play King Arthur's Kitchen? Number the events below in the order in which they happened.

- _____ Merlin teaches Arthur magic.
- _____ Arthur becomes King of England.
- _____ Roderick saves the day and becomes a knight.
- _____ Arthur gets Excalibur from the Lady in the Lake.
- 1 A dragon foretells the birth of the next King of England.
- _____ Morgana La Fay tries to steal Excalibur from Arthur.
- _____ The Barons discover the Sword in the Stone.

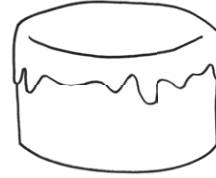
③ When Arthur was practicing his magic spells, he accidentally turned Kay in to what kind of animal? Connect the dots to find out!



KING ARTHUR'S KITCHEN PRIMARY ACTIVITY BOOK

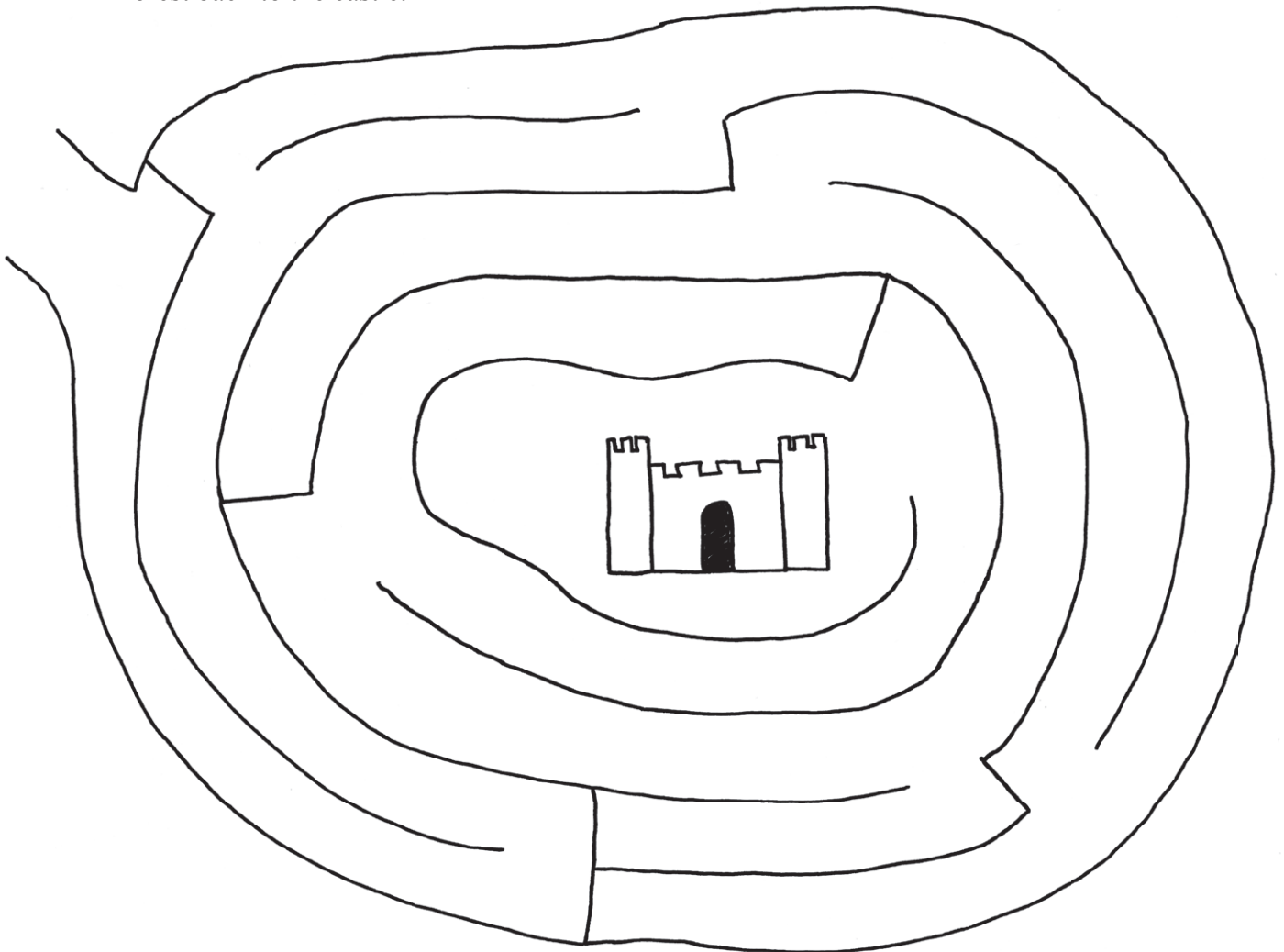
- ④ If King Arthur wanted to share his birthday cake with 5 of his knights how many cuts does he need to make to the cake so that all 6 people get a slice? King Arthur wants to make as few cuts as possible to the cake. Use the picture to help you and then write your answer in the space provided.

He needs to cut the cake _____ times.



- ⑤ If King Arthur invited 12 knights to his birthday party and two knights did not come and of those knights that did come only half brought gifts, how many presents did King Arthur receive?

- ⑥ King Arthur and Sir Lancelot went hunting and got lost. Help them find their way from the forest back to the castle.



INTERMEDIATE ASSIGNMENTS

A Day in the Life...

- Try to imagine what it must have been like to live in King Arthur's Court. Pick a person who would have lived in Camelot – a knight, a lady in waiting, a scullion, the court jester, the blacksmith... the list is endless! Do some research on what their life was like. What did they wear? What did they eat? Where did they sleep? What was their job? Write an account of a typical day in their life.

The Round Table...today

- The Knights of the Round Table followed an agreed upon code of honourable behavior – this was called chivalry. In essence, the code of chivalry meant that the Knights vowed to protect the distressed, to speak the truth, to keep his word to all, to be courteous and gentle to women, to defend right against might, and to do or say nothing that should sully the fair name of knighthood. Take some time to think about what you consider honourable behavior. Does the code the Knights of the Round Table followed reflect your values? If not, what changes would you make? Write your own code of chivalry.

Teacher: Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6

- Present your code of chivalry to your group. What are the similarities or differences? As a group, amalgamate each individual code into one code that everyone in the group can agree on.

Magic or Myth?

- Many of the stories about King Arthur involve some element of magic and fantasy – pulling the sword from the stone, Excalibur making him invincible, Morgana being part fairy, Merlin being a magician. Do you think these stories of magical events are true or is there another more scientific explanation? Pick a side and write an essay defending your argument. Be prepared to spend some time in the library researching your position!

TEACHER LED ACTIVITIES

Primary

- Remind the students about the rivalry between King Arthur and his sister Morgana Le Fay. Lead the students in a discussion about jealousy. Have they ever been jealous of someone? Why were they jealous? Has anyone ever been jealous of them? How did it make them feel? Morgana Le Fay's jealousy led her to be quite mean to Arthur. Have the students ever behaved poorly out of jealousy? Why? Did their behavior make things better or worse? Discuss strategies for dealing with jealousy in the future.
- Lead the students in a discussion about bravery. In what kind of situations might King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table need to be brave? Are there situations in the students' own lives where they have needed to be brave? Why is it hard sometimes to be brave? Is it easier to be brave for someone else or for yourself? Why is it important to be brave?

Intermediate

- There are a vast amount of records detailing King Arthur's life and accomplishments. However, they can be quite varied in terms of what they deem to be the truth. Historical events have merged with fantasy to the point where it can be difficult to tell which is which anymore. Lead the students in a discussion about myths and legends. What are they? Why do they persist and grow over time? Why are they important to us? What is it about King Arthur, Camelot and the Knights of the Round Table that has led to them becoming legendary?
- The formation of the Knights of the Round Table was one of King Arthur's greatest achievements – no one person sat at the "head" of the table, everyone at the table had an equal voice. By giving every Knight equal status in his court, King Arthur was able to put an end to the civil wars which were ravaging England and unify the country. King Arthur was then able to get people to work together for the benefit of everyone. Using the Round Table as starting point, lead the students in a discussion about cooperation and teamwork. Does it make a group/team capable of achieving more or less? Faster or in more time? Why?
- The United Nations could be considered a modern day Round Table. Have the students draw parallels about how the principles the United Nations operates on are the same or different than the Code of Chivalry the Knights of the Round Table used.

Additional Activities

We have developed some additional activities for your students - please visit our website:

www.axistheatre.com