

STUDY GUIDE

DISCIPLINE:
DRAMA

ARTIST:
LESLIE MCCURDY



The following package is provided as a supplemental resource to enhance and support the artist’s visit.

It includes curricular connections, assessment strategies, and suggested classroom extensions. All materials are intended for use at the teacher’s discretion and may be adapted as necessary to suit the specific needs of the students.

THIS STUDY GUIDE

Discipline / Artist Example:

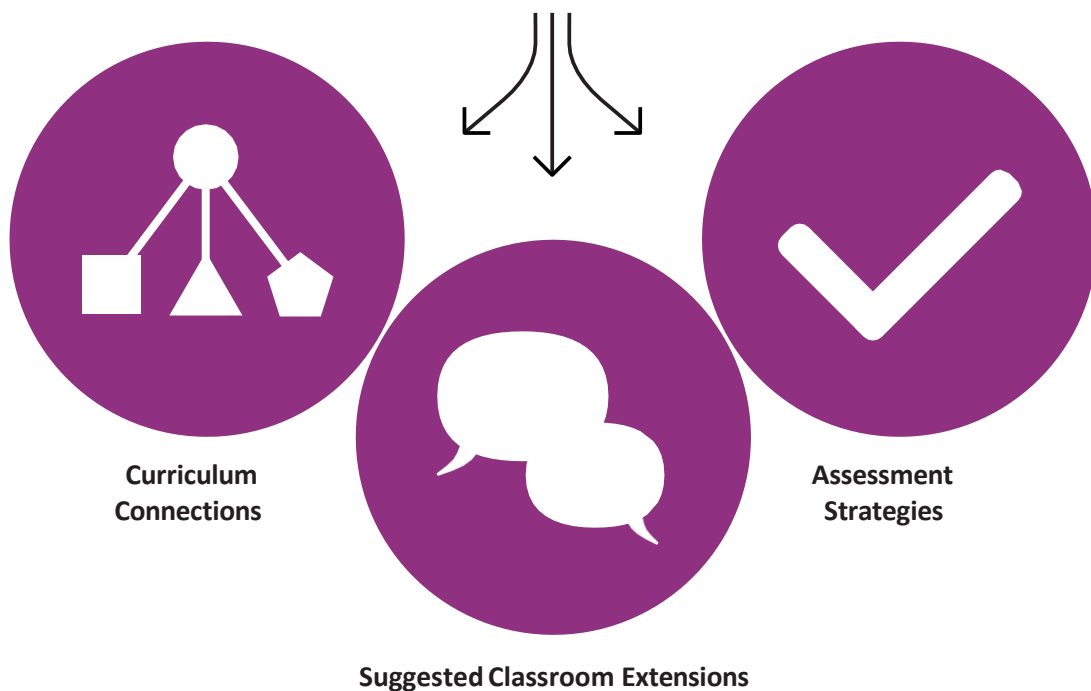


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STUDY GUIDE: DRAMA

THINGS MY FORE-SISTERS SAW

Program Overview

Artist Name: Leslie McCurdy

Artist Bio: Leslie McCurdy is an award-winning actor, dancer, singer, and playwright with over 30 years of international experience. A recipient of multiple honours, including the Platinum Jubilee Pin, she trained in dance and shifted to acting after an injury. Known for her one-woman plays like *The Spirit of Harriet Tubman*, Leslie's work combines artistry with social consciousness. She also mentors young performers in her hometown.

Program Description: Students will meet four women of African descent who affected significant social change in Canada: Marie-Joseph Angelique, a slave in Montreal; Rose Fortune, the first policewoman in North America; Mary-Ann Shad, educator and journalist; Viola Desmond who wouldn't give in to segregation. Students will understand how these women affected change in Canada and how their actions have shaped our lives.

Artistic Discipline: Theatre Drama

Recommended Grade Levels: 7 – 12

Session Logistics: In person or online

Cultural Context: Black Legacy, North American



History

Vocab bank/glossary: [Click here](#)



THINGS MY FORE-SISTERS SAW

Curriculum Connections

Learning Themes:

- Strand A – Creating and Presenting
 - Perform scenes or monologues from the play.
 - Create presentations of historical events.
- Strand B – Reflecting, Responding and Analyzing
 - Discuss character motivations and story arcs.
 - Reflect on the impact of historical events on communities.
- Strand C – Exploring Forms and Cultural Contexts
 - Explore the historical and cultural context of the women featured in the play.
 - Examine the significance of slavery, segregation and civil rights in Canada.

THINGS MY FORE-SISTERS SAW

Extend the Learning (Discussion Prompts)

Here are optional discussion prompts to extend the artist session in the classroom. These are recommended and are not mandatory. Please use what is best for your classroom. You can also find suggested activities in the additional resources package.

GRADES
7-8

Pre

- How can theatre help us understand history?
- Why is it important to tell stories about people who fought for civil rights?

During

- How does the performer show historical context through voice, movement, and expression?
- What examples of activism or resistance appear in the play?

Post

- How could you use storytelling to highlight social justice issues?
- What did you learn about courage, advocacy, or resilience?

GRADES

9-12

Pre

- How does one-person theatre convey complex history and social issues?
- Why is it important to study figures like Marie-Joseph Angélique or Viola Desmond?

During

- How does the actor use performance techniques to convey emotion, conflict, and context?
- What historical or cultural insights can you gain from the stories?

Post

- How could you adapt or reinterpret these stories for modern audiences?
- What connections can you make between the play's themes and current social issues?

DRAMA OVERVIEW

Drama is an art form that reflects and shapes culture while promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and reconciliation. Through storytelling and performance, it fosters empathy and deepens understanding of diverse experiences. Drama education builds essential skills like communication, collaboration, creativity, and problem solving, while supporting student well-being by offering a safe space to explore identity and self-expression.

The **creative and critical analysis process** guide students in imagining, planning, interpreting, and reflecting on artistic work and can complement artist-led sessions. These frameworks empower students to become thoughtful creators, reflective learners, and active participants in building a more just and connected world.

Drama is inherently an interdisciplinary art form and serves as a powerful tool for cross-curricular learning. The discussion prompts and suggested activities in this guide are designed to help bridge connections across subjects, deepen engagement, and extend the learning in relevant, authentic, and transformative ways.



APPENDIX

Vocabulary bank/glossary:

- **Marie-Joseph Angélique:** An enslaved Black woman in 18th-century Montreal who was accused of setting a fire that destroyed a large part of the city. Her story is one of resistance and tragedy.
- **Rose Fortune:** Considered North America's first female police officer; a Black woman in Nova Scotia who provided security and assistance to travelers and settlers.
- **Mary Ann Shadd:** The first Black woman in Canada and North America to publish and edit a newspaper, advocating for abolition and Black rights.
- **Viola Desmond:** A Black Canadian woman who challenged racial segregation by refusing to leave a "whites-only" area of a movie theatre, leading to a landmark civil rights case.
- **Resistance:** Actions taken to oppose or fight against oppression, injustice, or authority.
- **Abolition:** The movement to end slavery and the legal practice of enslaving people.
- **Civil Rights:** The rights of citizens to political and social freedom and equality.
- **Segregation:** The enforced separation of different racial groups in a country, community, or establishment.
- **Activism:** The practice of campaigning vigorously to bring about political or social change.
- **Empowerment:** The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights.
- **Legacy:** Something handed down from an ancestor or from the past, often referring to lasting impact or contributions.

Student Health and Well-Being

How did today's activity make you feel (body and mind)?

- Choose a colour to describe that feeling. Use one word to describe how your energy changed after the activity.

Mini-Activity: Feelings Freeze Frame (Tableau)

- Ask students to create a freeze-frame (tableau) that shows how they're feeling right after the activity.
- Then, they can:
 - Share it with a partner or small group
 - Draw their freeze-frame in a journal
 - Write or talk about what made them feel that way

Additional Resources

- Assessment Guide
- Cultural Protocol/Sensitivity Guide
- Evaluation Document
- Resource Database for Further Learning