



**Bits N Pieces Puppet Theatre**

# Treasure Island — Classroom Activity Guide (PreK–5th Grade)

*A Bits N Pieces Puppet Theatre Educator Resource*

## About the Show

**Treasure Island** whisks elementary audiences onto a musical, puppet-powered adventure where curiosity sparks courage and every choice helps shape a hero. Jim Hawkins begins as an ordinary kid in an ordinary inn — until a mysterious treasure map lands in his hands and flips his world upside down. With catchy songs, expressive wooden marionettes, and a story full of laughs and heart, students discover that bravery isn't about being fearless. It's about taking the next step even when the waves get wobbly.

For centuries, Czech marionette makers have carved stories from wood, wire, and string — building characters meant for one storyteller to bring to life. This production proudly carries that tradition forward. Each puppet is crafted in the spirit of the old masters, where **one performer becomes the entire cast**: narrator, hero, villain, and everyone in between. The magic comes from that blend of maker and performer — the puppeteer shifting voices, rhythms, and movements to create a world that feels alive.

This 35-minute musical retelling of Stevenson's classic keeps all the fun — hidden treasure, pirate plots, and high-seas surprises — while grounding the adventure in themes kids instantly understand: **honesty, loyalty, friendship, and choosing right even when wrong looks shiny**. As Jim faces storms, tricky friendships, and the glitter of gold, he discovers that the real treasure isn't buried in a chest. It's the kind of person he becomes along the way.

## Synopsis — *Treasure Island*

Jim Hawkins, a young innkeeper's son with big dreams, longs to escape his quiet seaport life. His mother insists he stay grounded, but Jim's heart is already leaning toward adventure. When the ragged pirate **Billy Bones** stumbles into the inn with a dire warning — "*Beware the man with one-leg stride*" — Jim discovers a **treasure map** that changes everything.

Soon the charismatic yet dangerous **Long John Silver** arrives, sweeping Jim into a voyage aboard the **Hispaniola**. As the ship sets sail, Jim experiences both the thrill and terror of the open sea. During a violent storm, he hides in a barrel and overhears Silver and his parrot **Greensnout** plotting to **steal the treasure and abandon him on the island**. Remembering his mother's words — "*Courage isn't loud... it's steady*" — Jim resolves to act.

On the island, Jim meets the eccentric castaway **Ben Gunn**, who reveals he already knows Flint's treasure secrets. Together, the two hatch a plan: steal the treasure chest, sink Silver's ship, and escape before the pirates discover the truth. Their teamwork succeeds — Silver digs up an empty pit, erupts in frustration, and eventually falls asleep while Jim and Ben drag the real treasure away.

Silver awakens to find his ship sinking and his plans ruined. Though defeated, he shares a surprisingly heartfelt farewell with Jim, who wishes him a kinder future. Greensnout offers a squawking goodbye as Jim and Ben row homeward with the treasure.

In the finale, the company sings of the true meaning of treasure — **friendship, courage, honesty, and choosing what’s right**. Jim returns home wiser, braver, and forever changed by the adventure he dared to chase.

## Before the Show

### For PreK–2

- Read the short synopsis of the story aloud.
- Show students a picture of a treasure map. Ask:
  - What do you think treasure hunters look for?
  - What might Jim find on his adventure?
- Ask students to draw what they think a pirate puppet might look like.

### For Grades 2–3

- Read the short synopsis of the story.
- Discuss:
  - What makes a character brave?
  - What choices might Jim have to make?
  - What do you think a marionette performance looks like?

### For Grades 4–5 Read a simplified summary of *Treasure Island*.

- Read the short synopsis of the story.
- Discuss:
  - What choices might Jim have to make on his adventure?
  - How can a puppeteer show emotion using movement instead of facial expressions?
  - What do you think a marionette performance looks like?

Ask students to sketch a puppet design for a character and label how the strings or rods might move different parts of the body.

## Benchmarks Connected to the Performance

### Language Arts

- Identify characters, settings, and major events.
- Compare and contrast book vs. performance.
- Describe how music and movement help tell a story.

### Theatre

- Demonstrate appropriate audience behavior.
- Respond to a performance with drawings or writing.
- Explain how puppetry uses movement, sound, and storytelling.

# The Role of the Audience

*(Teacher reads aloud)*

- You are part of the performance — the puppeteer can see and hear you.
- Enter quietly and listen for instructions.
- Laugh when something is funny, clap at the end, and stay seated until dismissed.
- Live theatre is different from TV — no commercials, no running around, and the story is happening right in front of you.

## After the Show

### Language Arts — Reading

Use a Venn Diagram to compare:

- Jim Hawkins in the book vs. Jim in the puppet show
- The pirates in the book vs. the marionette versions
- The setting as described in text vs. how it appears on stage

Students should note:

- How characters move
- How music changes the mood
- How puppets show emotion without facial changes

### Language Arts — Writing

Ask students to write or draw a new ending:

**Prompts:**

- What if Jim kept the treasure for himself?
- What if Long John Silver made a different choice?
- What if the map led somewhere unexpected?

Students should:

- Use temporal words (first, next, then, finally)
- Describe feelings, actions, and choices
- Provide a sense of closure

## Storytelling Activities

### Theatre Concepts

- Suspend disbelief — pretend the story is happening for the first time.

- One storyteller plays many characters.
- Music sets the mood.
- Movement suggests props, ships, storms, and treasure.

## Storytelling Games

1. **Pass-the-Story Circle** Each student adds one sentence to Jim’s adventure.
2. **Fractured Treasure Tale** Turn the story into a modern version:
  - Jim finds a treasure map in the school library
  - Long John Silver is the cafeteria chef
  - Pirates are the school’s sports team
3. **Mystery Object Story** Show a seashell, compass, or key. Students invent how it fits into Jim’s journey.

# Puppet Theatre Activity

## Make a Simple Czech-Style Stick Marionette

- Print characters on card stock.
- Color, cut, and tape a straw behind the puppet.
- Perform in front of a folded paper “ship deck,” “inn” backdrop, or “Treasure Island.”

## Performance Ideas

- Act out Jim finding the treasure map.
- Create a storm-at-sea scene using sound effects.
- Use desk lamps for lighting: bright sun, storm clouds, moonlight.
- Add ocean sounds, pirate shouts, or creaking ship noises.

# Classroom Activities by Subject

## Science

Use puppets to show:

- How storms form
- How waves move
- How sailors navigate using stars

## Literature

Act out a favorite scene from the book using shadow puppets.

## Cultures

Explore puppetry traditions from:

- Czech Republic (Czech Marionettes)
- Indonesia (Wayang)
- Japan (Bunraku)

Compare how different cultures tell stories with puppets.

## History

Discuss real pirates vs. storybook pirates. Create a “history TV show” using a cardboard puppet stage.

## Art

Study old treasure maps. Students design their own map with symbols, paths, and hidden clues.

## Music

Write a class sea-shanty:

- Who you are
- What you want
- How you’ll get there

Perform with simple rhythm instruments.

# Vocabulary Words

Adventure Treasure Courage Loyalty  
Map Compass Pirate Friendship  
Storm Ship Crew Honesty

**Activity:** Choose a character and list rhyming words (Jim / swim / trim). Write a sentence using the rhymes.

# Comprehension Questions

## Who? What? Where?

1. Who are the characters in *Treasure Island*?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What problem does Jim face?
4. What three important events happen?
5. How is the problem solved?

## Story Map

- **Beginning:** Who, where, when
- **Middle:** Problem, goal
- **End:** Solution

# Questions to Ask After the Show

1. What did you like best?

2. Which puppet was your favorite? Why?
3. How did the music make you feel?
4. Was the story funny, exciting, or scary?
5. What did Jim learn about being brave?

## Closing Message

*Treasure Island* reminds students that courage grows every time we dare to move forward — and that the greatest treasure is the kind of person we choose to become.

Bits ‘N Pieces Puppet Theatre receives the support of the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners, Hillsborough County Schools, Broward County Schools, Pinellas County R’Clubs and participating schools, libraries, and cultural centers across Florida and the Southeastern US.

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