

njpac
arts
education

**schooltime
performance
series**



maddog & me

**bullying and
the power of kindness**

teacher resource guide



about the company

David Gonzalez is a renowned storyteller and musician with roots in the Bronx and Cuba. His performance, *Maddog & Me*, blends world fables and personal stories to address the culture of cruelty in today's society. Using expressive voice, gesture and movement, Gonzalez brings multiple characters to life, engaging students in meaningful ways. Through tales drawn from global traditions and his own experiences growing up in a tough neighborhood, he examines the roles of bully, victim and bystander. The performance encourages reflection and promotes the development of compassionate relationships and stronger, more inclusive communities.

cultural connections

Storytelling is one of the oldest and most universal forms of human expression. Long before written language, oral storytelling served as a way to pass down knowledge, traditions, values and beliefs from generation to generation. It was how societies remembered their past, explained natural phenomena and taught moral lessons.

In ancient cultures around the world, storytelling was central to rituals and communal gatherings. Myths, legends and folktales helped create a shared cultural identity and provided a framework for understanding the world.

At the heart of this tradition is the storyteller — a vital figure who serves as historian, teacher, entertainer and spiritual guide. In many cultures, storytellers hold a respected position, seen as keepers of wisdom and collective memory. Many African storytellers, for example, memorize and perform genealogies, battles and moral lessons through song and spoken word. In Native American communities, storytellers often bridge the spiritual and natural worlds, sharing narratives that are deeply tied to the land and ancestry.

Even today, in books, films, podcasts and digital media, storytelling continues to evolve, but the storyteller's role remains central. They shape narratives that bind communities, evoke emotion and spark imagination — reminding us that storytelling is not just entertainment, but a core part of what makes us human.

In school settings, bullying often reflects narratives about power, status, and belonging. Framing it through storytelling — as accomplished in *Maddog & Me* — gives students a culturally responsive lens to examine the roles of bully, target, and bystander. Across traditions, stories are used to model courage, repair and communal responsibility. Connecting this work to social-emotional learning and restorative practices invites students to practice naming harm, making amends and rebuilding trust. Attending to identity-based bullying affirms the lived experiences of students and fosters identity-safe classrooms.

vocabulary

Articulate

To speak clearly

Biographic

Consisting of facts or events from a person's real life

Bully

A person in a position of power who abuses or intimidates someone less likely to fight back

Bystander

A person who is at an event but is not involved or taking part in the event

Character

People, animals, items or creatures in a story that can think, feel or move

Fable

A short story that teaches a lesson; characters are often animals



First-person narration

The narrator is a character in the story, telling the story from their point of view

Folktale

A story that gets passed down from generation to generation in a group of people from the same area or family; originally, these tales were passed down through oral telling

Gesture

Movement of part(s) of the body

Myth

A story about a hero or event that usually tries to explain why something happens in nature

Pace

The speed of speaking

Project

To speak loud enough to be heard

Storyteller

A person who tells a memorized story to an audience using physicality and sound/speech

Third-person narration

The narrator is outside of the story, telling the story using character names or referring to the characters as he, she, they, etc.

Upstander

A person who stands up for or acts to help someone who is being bullied

Victim

The person harmed or hurt in a situation

inspired learning for the classroom

Teacher Focus		Student Activity	NJ Student Learning Standards	
P	Prepare	<p>Discover what your students already know about this art form, topic or type of performance. Then explain more fully what they will see at the theater and why it's important. This can be accomplished by sharing images, vocabulary, videos, or context that might help them appreciate the performance more fully.</p>	<p>Talk to your students about the difference(s) between telling a story and reading a book out loud. Then, show students one of the teaser trailers for <i>Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness</i>.</p> <p>Trailer One David Gonzalez - Maddog and Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness</p> <p>Trailer Two Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness Virtual Assembly Performance</p> <p>Video Introduction to Oral Storytelling</p> <p>Video The Secret to Telling a Great Story — in Less Than 60 Seconds</p> <p>Learn more about David Gonzalez artist website</p>	<p>English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL2</p> <p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7</p>
E	Experience	<p>For some students, this may be their first time in a theater. Review audience etiquette and go over expectations for arrival and departure from the theater. Before watching the show, provide a discussion question for them to consider during the performance.</p> <p>Optional: At school, let students share a one-word answer to a prompt about how they feel (eg. which TV character do you feel like today? If you were a texture, what texture would you be?). After the field trip, ask students the same question and let them explain why they feel the same or why they feel differently.</p>	<p>Challenge students to pay attention to their reactions and feelings throughout the performance (i.e., laughing, feeling sad, angry or surprised).</p> <p>Ask the following questions before the performance, and answer them after as a class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. When did you notice those feelings during the performance?2. What did David do to hold or grab your attention when he was telling stories?3. Why do you think people tell stories?	<p>English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.SL3</p> <p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 7, 8</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making</p>
R	Reflect	<p>Give students a moment to think about their answer to the discussion question you introduced in the experience section. Then allow them to share their response out loud with the class. Next, have students reflect on the skillset of the performers they saw in the show. Go around the class and have each student fill in the following statement: “I can already _____ like the performers did, but I can’t _____ yet!” After everyone is done, remind them that with enough time and practice, they can accomplish anything they set their minds to.</p>	<p>After the class discussion, create an anchor chart to record the ideas students have about what the performer did to elicit their reactions during the performance.</p> <p>Create a list of the various reasons students believe people tell stories. Challenge students to come up with stories they know that may be shared for similar reasons to the ones on the created list; they can write the name of the story, book, movie, etc., and attach it to the list.</p> <p>Encourage students to share examples of bullying they have seen on TV, in movies or in real life. Allow for an open space where these situations can be shared. Approach this sharing by having other students focus on what a bystander of the situation could do to be an upstander.</p>	<p>English Language Arts NJSLSA.SL1, NJSLSA.SL2, NJSLSA.SL4</p> <p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 8, 9, 11</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness</p>
F	Focus	<p>Use this time to review the vocabulary section and complete the <i>SchoolTime</i> activity sheets.</p>	<p><i>Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness activity sheets</i></p>	<p>English Language Arts NJSLSA.W3, NJSLSA.W4, NJSLSA.R.2, NJSLSA.R.3, NJSLSA.R.7</p> <p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 2, 3, 4, 10</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills</p>
O	Originate	<p>After reviewing vocabulary, write a class poem about the performance, where each student adds a line. Once the poem is complete, read the poem as a class three times with each student saying the line they wrote. Before each repetition, give them a prompt to inform how they deliver their line (eg. say it like you’re excited, scared, angry, etc.).</p> <p>Optional: To reinforce learning from the focus section, encourage students to incorporate all the vocabulary words.</p>		<p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 10</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills</p>
R	Rehearse	<p>Have each student draw their own picture inspired by the show and their class poem. As they are working, use this time to walk around and ask them each about what they are drawing, the materials they are using, and what inspired them.</p>		<p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 1, 2, 7, 10</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills</p>
M	Mix it all together!	<p>Allow each student to present their artwork and discuss why they drew what they did, giving them an opportunity to express themselves visually and verbally.</p> <p>Between presentations, allow two or three students to describe their reactions to the artwork that was presented. Encourage them to use phrases like “It reminded me of _____” or “It made me feel _____” rather than describing the art as good or bad.</p> <p>Once everyone is done presenting, put the artwork up on the wall with the class poem to complete your students’ poem gallery.</p>		<p>Visual & Performing Arts Anchor Standard 5, 6, 7, 8, 10</p> <p>Social Emotional Learning Competencies Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Social-Awareness, Relationship Skills</p>

curriculum standards

English Language Arts
NJSLSA.R2
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

NJSLSA.R3
Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

NJSLSA.R.7
Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

NJSLSA.SL1
Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL2
Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL3
Evaluate a speaker’s point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

NJSLSA.SL4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W3
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

NJSLSA.W4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Social Emotional Learning Competencies
Relationship Skills
Relationship skills: communicating effectively

Responsible Decision Making
Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school; Identifying solutions for personal and social problems; Learning how to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, and facts; demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness

Self-Awareness
Integrating personal and social identities; identifying one’s emotions; Linking feelings, values and thoughts

Social-Awareness
Taking others’ perspectives;
Showing concern for the feelings of others

Visual & Performing Arts
Anchor Standard 1
Conceptualizing and generating ideas

Anchor Standard 2
Organizing and developing ideas

Anchor Standard 3
Refining and completing products

Anchor Standard 4
Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.

Anchor Standard 5
Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation

Anchor Standard 6
Convey meaning through presentation of artistic work

Anchor Standard 7
Perceiving and analyzing products

Anchor Standard 8
Applying criteria to evaluate products

Anchor Standard 10
Synthesizing and relating knowledge and personal experiences to create products.

additional resources

NJPAC
About NJPAC
njpac.org/about

NJPAC’s Arts Education programs
njpac.org/arts-education

NJPAC’s David G. Berger Master Class Series
njpac.org/berger

Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness
Activity Sheets
njpac.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Maddog_ActivitySheets.pdf

Websites
David Gonzalez website
davidgonzalez.com

History of Storytelling Timeline
preceden.com/timeline/history-of-storytelling

Story Village with Aunti Oni
youtu.be/xTDQ7HZPZIM?si=Q1zsiDwGdVbnU8xg

Podcasts
Who, When, Wow! Podcast
tinkercast.com/all-podcasts/who-when-wow

NPR | *Circle Round* Podcast
npr.org/podcasts/532788972/circle-round

NatGeo Kids | *Greeking Out*
nationalgeographic.com/podcasts/greeking-out

Videos
Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness trailer
youtu.be/ATFNo8A3EIE?si=1EgD-9hmvDLMpgTA

Maddog & Me: Bullying and the Power of Kindness
virtual assembly performance
youtu.be/Xw95PD3LjQk?si=e_cDD0kKi3YqLLIk

I Walk With Vanessa: A Wordless Picture Book
youtu.be/nQHhg9HeOso?si=WAdrWAMpI17OckTa

Last Stop on Market Street
Spanish and English Read Aloud
youtu.be/P33A-M2SXEU?si=mOQoG4hRLq3g6QWK

Introduction to Oral Storytelling
youtu.be/8VlyAb2qaGI?si=ti7Dv2ya9yFOiU54B

TED | Jenny Hoyos: The Secret to Telling a Great Story
youtu.be/ZmNpeXTj2c4?si=HLWqNw_pwHLJDGVT

Storytelling Games for Kids
youtu.be/wQEukEe2vE?si=6Ka__9HorOkNFRya

bring the arts to your school

In-School Residencies

NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible in-person residencies are designed to meet your needs and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

Professional Development

Calling all educators! Expand your teaching skills, deepen your curriculum and give yourself a creative boost in NJPAC's forward-thinking professional development workshops. Our virtual PD programs are for teachers all the way from pre-K to high school and include hip hop, dance, storytelling, theater, music and more. Not only will you learn something... you'll also have fun and be inspired.

NJPAC Arts Education Schooltime team*:

Dr. Sherri-Ann Butterfield

*Senior Vice President,
Social Impact*

Jennifer Tsukayama

Vice President, Arts Education

Rosa Hyde

*Senior Director,
Performances & Special Initiatives*

Dr. Patricio Molina

*Senior Director,
Faculty & Creative Practice*

Treasure Borde

*Senior Manager,
Performances & Special Initiatives*

April Jeffries

*Manager,
Outreach & Sales Manager*

Andrea Seigel

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

Sarah Mickle

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

Azriel Wallace

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

Rob Reddington

Teacher Resource Guide Committee

*This guide was written by

Andrea Seigel and reviewed by
Dr. Patricio Molina

contact us!

For more information or to schedule an appointment,
please email our team at artseducation@njpac.org.
Or visit njpac.org/education

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+ deceased