

The Greatest Show on Mirth

ABOUT THE PRESENTER

Nels Ross Cremean of *In Jest, Inc.* has won the hearts of audiences throughout North America and abroad. Applying his background in education and performing arts, including training with instructors from UB Theatre & Dance and Cirque du Soleil, Nels presents arts-in-ed programs that promote character education, wellness, math, science, reading, and more through a blend of physical theater, variety arts, music, language play (i.e. humor), and a theme.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Perfect for celebrations any time of the year, this side-splitting, gravity-defying performance features the art of juggling, physical theater, and humor. *The Greatest Show on Mirth* highlights the value of *laughter* and *play* for the development of art, science, and invention as well as for being mirthful (i.e. joyful). It also conveys that every person can contribute to making the world a better place by *doing good*. (All Ages)

"Life must be lived as play."
- Plato

"We are here to do good to others. What the others are her for, I don't know."
- W. H. Auden

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

This performance will enhance awareness and appreciation of physical theater, variety arts, and the issues mentioned above. In addition, the activities in this study guide provide many connections to New York State Learning Standards (see AFTER THE PROGRAM).

GETTING READY FOR THE PROGRAM

- Arrange for a clean, well lit performance space with 10' or higher ceiling if possible. Focus and repair lights in advance if needed. Nels brings his own sound system, and requests access 30-45 minutes before the program.
- Make a morning announcement the day of the performance:
"Today our special guest from *In Jest* will share an exciting assembly program with us. So be prepared to laugh and enjoy amazing skills, stunts, humor, and more!"
- Topics for exploration: physical theater, variety arts, humor, juggling, circus, vaudeville
- Questions for discussion: Where have you seen juggling and humor? What makes something funny? What are different forms of play?

AFTER THE PROGRAM

- Discuss and/or write about the experience. How did it affect you? What did you learn?
The Arts—Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
English Language Arts—Language for Information and Understanding
- Check out www.injest.com/extras to find info on the history of juggling and physical comedy, instructions for how to juggle, puzzles related to the program, and other resources.
Mathematics, Science, & Technology—Information Systems
English Language Arts—Language for Information and Understanding
- Use the library or internet to learn more about juggling, humor, or other program components.
Mathematics, Science, & Technology—Information Systems
- Create an art project or poster that features juggling, humor, or the theme of the program.
The Arts—Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
- Read stories, poems, or articles about juggling, humor, or a topic related to the program. Write your own story, poem, or report.
English Language Arts—Language for Information and Understanding
English Language Arts—Language for Literary Response and Expression
- Research the role of juggling in various cultures throughout history. Create a timeline or world map with descriptions or illustrations. (See www.injest.com/extras for a starting point.)
The Arts—Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts
Social Studies—World History
- Research the history of circus, vaudeville, or other venues where variety artists have performed in the United States. If possible, interview variety artists from New York.
Social Studies—History of the United States and New York
- Investigate applications of juggling in the study of science, mathematics, and other fields. Search *Discover*, *Scientific American*, and other periodicals for articles.
Mathematics, Science, & Technology—Analysis, Inquiry, and Design
- Juggle! It's a fun and safe activity that develops patience, persistence, self-discipline, and more. Below are ways to benefit from juggling as an ongoing activity.
Physical Education—Personal Health and Fitness
The Arts—Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
The Arts—Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Learn new skills. If you can juggle scarves or beanbags, try other things such as rings, clubs, devil sticks, diabolo, hats, cigar boxes, tops, yoyos, spinning plates, etc.

Get connected. Go to www.juggle.org to join the International Jugglers' Association and get Juggle Magazine. Go to www.jugglingdb.com to find jugglers and events near you.

Share the joy. Teach others how to juggle. Join a juggling club or start one of your own. Put on shows or demonstrations for your friends, family, school, or community.