



## Journey of an Irish Immigrant Study Guide

### Interactive Plays

Kitty's unique interactive plays weave history, literature, manners, customs, dance and music into theatrical presentations where audience members - both teachers and students - portray the key characters and historical figures of the times. Great sensitivity is used when involving participants, as some folks would prefer to sit back and watch the antics of their comrades.

*In order to set good examples of theatre etiquette, it is respectfully requested that teachers attend programs without papers or homework in hand.*

### Journey of an Irish Immigrant

Liverpool England (1894) The show follows the journey of Irish Immigrant, Maggie McLaughlin, and her sister, Annie, as they make their way across the Atlantic. The voyage begins in Liverpool, England, with a demonstration of what items were commonly found in immigrants' trunks. The various reasons immigrants left their homeland are then depicted as an Italian family retells their story of life in rural Italy. The program focuses on the harsh conditions of the boats and the courage it takes to sail across the ocean. Though ocean travel was challenging, the immigrants engage a Russian family in a high-stepping Irish dance aboard the boat. Once in America, the immigrants are then subjected to rigorous examinations at Ellis Island.



### Maggie McLaughlin

Maggie is a fictitious Irish woman emigrating from County Cork, Ireland, in search of a better life in America. She is strong and brave as she challenges the exploitation and discrimination of her people upon arrival.

### Performance Objectives

Create a supportive environment whereby students' participation results in a positive, self-affirming experience allowing them to co-create the show with the character and To demonstrate how difficult it was to immigrate to our country and the immense courage it took to embark on such a journey.



## Pre-Show Preparation

Familiarize students with the geography of Europe and the United States

Discuss with students the Industrial Revolution and the myriad opportunities available to immigrants (skilled and unskilled) - e.g. mining, factory work, the building of canals, bridges, roads, railroads and cities

## Post-Show Activities

Have students create a character (either research their own family history or create a fictitious family) - and write a biography about their journey.

- Include why they left their homeland?
- With whom did they travel?
- Did they have family waiting for them in America?
- Where were they planning to settle?
- Did they have money?
- Could they read/write English?

Have them come dressed as their character and tell their stories

## The Artist

Having developed her unique style of interactive theatre since 1987, Kitty combines her passion for history with her love of theatre to create 16 different high-energy shows.

Ms. Jones brings 4000 years of history and literature to life in programs ranging from *The Mysteries of Ancient Egypt* to *Women's Rights*. Since 1996, she has written, choreographed, produced and performed her own original material for Kit's Interactive Theatre. Kitty Jones has appeared on TV, Film and the stages of New York.

