

THE FABLE OF THE SQUIRREL

TEACHING DOSSIER

PREMIO NACIONAL DE
ARTES ESCÉNICAS PARA LA
INFANCIA Y LA JUVENTUD 2020



La Bafdufa

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1. THE SHOW

The Fable of the Squirrel is a medium-format **multidisciplinary theatrical show**, aimed at **family audience, recommended from 3 years and upwards**, which aims to talk about **miscegenation**.

The story has two protagonists, **the squirrel and the hedgehog**, who learn to live together and even to love each other, despite their differences.

The big hedgehog lives quietly in the shade of the great oak, and looking after his own, while enjoying his neck of the woods. However, one day, like any other, this peace will be disturbed by the arrival of a squirrel who is kind, mischievous and playful. Their living together won't be easy. We will find out about an unfriendly and protective hedgehog, and a squirrel wanting to know and share more. We will discover his personality throughout the fable and, also, the transformation that both will undergo due to coexistence.

Conceptually, it resembles other company shows, such as Safari or Mix Up at the Farm. But, on this occasion, only animals interact. This is why it refers to the genre of fables. The show also has a pianist located on stage throughout the whole show, who has, exclusively, an external look. It is a show with no words, in which music takes centre stage.

For the first time in a family show, La Baldufa bets on live music and a format without text. This gives it a singular poetic character that also differentiates it from other family shows of the company.





The relationship between the squirrel and the hedgehog tells us about **miscegenation, difference, coexistence, the effort to adapt, respect, change of habits**, etc. With the conviction that diversity enriches us, La Baldufa wants to bring this message to the small audience and generate this much-needed reflection.

Why, at the beginning of the story, do the two characters chase each other? What causes the squirrel to take care of the hedgehog as if it were its own child? Why does the hedgehog reject the abilities and characteristics of the squirrel? The experience of both animals may be easily extrapolated to people's daily lives. We live in society and interacting with people who are different to us is a life learning that we all have in the environment in which we move, from the smallest to the oldest.

One of the characteristics of fables is that they always end with a moral conclusion. Therefore, what does The Fable of the Squirrel tell us about? With this show, La Baldufa proposes us to think about, reflect on and delve into difference and miscegenation. The hedgehog and the squirrel are very different, but they have endless opportunities to learn and share together.

The company is convinced that, through education and work, positive attitudes and behaviours may be promoted, which allow a rich, sweet and calm coexistence.

The company wants:

- Invite reflection, whatever the age of the audience, without neglecting the taste for aesthetics and a body and musical language that allow the message to be transmitted to be understood at all times.
- Help understand the richness of diversity.
- Generate empathy for a situation that is very real to us.
- Continue with its social line, understanding theatre as a commitment to society. In The Imaginary Book the company bets on reflecting on power and made a small note on homosexuality. In Cirque Déjà Vu, they reflected on Alzheimer's, old age and friendship. In The Happy Prince, on the value of generosity. In My Father is an Ogre, about the evil of the good and the goodness of the bad and redemption. In Safari, the issue of bullying is addressed.

As far as the scenic language is concerned, Carles Pijuan's **scenography** makes a long grand piano turn into a tree in a forest, with hiding places and other surprises. Once again, a very attractive and aesthetically rich setting that faithfully accompanies the story throughout the show.



2. THE PLOT

The Fable of the Squirrel begins with the pianist on stage. The long grand piano is transformed into the oak that will be the space in which the story unfolds. This is a story about a squirrel that we see running away, because he has stolen an acorn. He finds a place to hide and go to the tree in the forest. He is not alone. Right in a burrow under the tree, lives the hedgehog, who, with great care and dedication, collects food and puts it away. The squirrel, who also needs food, steals everything he finds. That is why the two protagonists go into a chase that ends with the squirrel being run over..

Next, we see how, from inside the burrow, a small hedgehog that has been orphaned emerges. Initially, the squirrel has no intention of fathering him, but it seems that he has no choice but to take care of him and accompany him. So, when the wolf appears on the scene with the threat of wanting to devour them, the squirrel rushes to protect the hedgehog and they enter its burrow. Although instinctive, this is the first concession the squirrel makes.

The leaves of the tree fall, time passes, and the hedgehog grows older. The squirrel continues to take care of him, teaches and trains him. The hedgehog learns to do what squirrels do, but there is one thing he cannot do: climb the tree in the forest like his father and this becomes an obsession. So, he begins to pull out his own quills, symbolizing that he does not accept himself, that he rejects himself for not being able to do like the squirrel.

He would like to be what he is not. In a way, the squirrel, with so much training, has made the hedgehog feel that way.

When the squirrel realizes that the hedgehog is depressed, he begins his transformation. He seeks to get closer to the hedgehog, also giving value to what he is and knows. For this reason, he places some quills in his fur and, even, he ends up eating snails, because, although they are very disgusting to him, the hedgehog loves them.

The hedgehog regains the joy and meaning of his life and they both enjoy their relationship and entertain themselves by practicing hedgehog skills. And the wolf returns. Fleeing to avoid being eaten, the hedgehog manages to climb the tree alone, without anyone's help. The wolf and the squirrel star in another chase and there are another run over. After a few seconds of uncertainty, we discover that the one who has been run over is the wolf.

When the squirrel returns, he is surprised and delighted to see that the hedgehog has been able to climb up and down the tree alone. The hedgehog is also very happy to see that the squirrel is doing well.

At the end of the story, we can see how the protagonists play to be hedgehog and squirrel at the same time, as if they could no longer differentiate where one ends and the other begins, as if they had merged. The two animals have learned and enriched each other.

3. LTEACHING PROPOSALS

Going to the theatre is always an opportunity, not only for children, but also for adults. As we know, it is a fun activity, but also a great generator of learning if we want to take advantage of it. Sharing culture may arouse concerns, respond to different needs and allow us to learn an infinite number of things that will accompany little ones in their process of personal growth.

Through this dossier, we want to explain the essence of the show and propose some lines of work that we believe may help you delve into interesting aspects, above all, to generate debate and dialogue around the richness of diversity and respect for difference.

It should be noted that you may adapt the proposals to your needs, using only a part or rethinking what you consider, in order to delve into what interests you the most.

Before finalizing the proposals, we note that, if you have a need to share thoughts or wish to raise any questions or concerns with the company, you may send an email to this address: **baldufa@labaldufateatre.com**. Without a doubt, they will love to keep in touch with you.

To distribute the activities, we talked about three moments: **before going to the theatre, during the performance and after the show.**



BEFORE GOING TO THE THEATRE

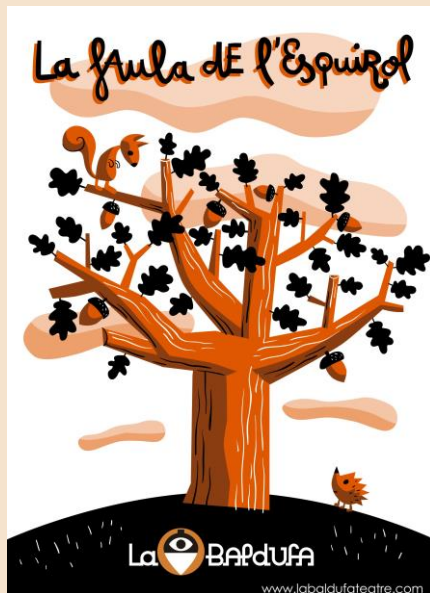
The most important thing before going to see the show is **contextualizing**. For this reason, some of the activities that we propose below are aimed at placing the children in what we are going to see.

1. What is a fable?

First, we asked about the title of the show: The Fable of the Squirrel. What is a fable? Do you know the most important characteristics? Do you know any other fable that they have told you? Who do you think may appear? What do you think it will be about?

2. The image of the show

We look at the poster of the show or the photographs on the web (<https://www.labaldufateatre.com/en/espectacles/the-fable-of-the-squirrel/>) and we try to get other interesting information.



3. dramatization with music

Starting from a fragment of music from the show, we may make a dramatization with music, illustrating what we think might happen. This is a show without text. In this way, we may carry out an important dramatic preliminary work on what mime is and how to express ourselves without saying a word. It may be that the music suggests a moment of peace and calm or, on the contrary, a distressing or dangerous situation, etc. What we want is that children may make hypotheses or start from musical fragments through the body and movement. In addition, when they see the show, they will be able to check if their predictions were true or not and, as they will identify some music, their attention and connection to the show will be intensified. We offer you these musical fragments:

7'25 – 9'24: Hedgehog presentation. Playful music

23'11 – 25'30: The wolf

28 – 30: One animal teaches the other

42'48 – 43'45: The hedgehog thinks the squirrel has been run over

You may listen to the musical fragments in the video of the show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xObUojk2T4c&t=2s>

BEFORE GOING TO THE THEATRE

4. Who am I? (Miscegenation dramatization)

In pairs, we choose two animals that, initially, are very different from each other and each one expresses, through the body, some of their characteristics, abilities or movements. For example, we may start from a spider and a hippopotamus. At first, we clearly perceive who performs each animal, but the idea is that, as the activity progresses, each one learns to do the other's, until, practically, we can no longer differentiate who is who.

5. The plot

Next, and after raising different hypotheses, we explain the synopsis and everything that we consider relevant. Only in this way may we generate expectations, raise questions and awaken their interest and motivation. It may also help to better interpret what they will encounter. If applicable, you may consult La Baldufa webpage and watch the video that it is posted.

6. Audience behave

Going to the theatre requires knowing how to behave, so we suggest that, you all may think and share criteria to consider: what attitude should a good audience have, how we should behave, what we cannot admit. In short, we may agree on how we will be doing it correctly or not.

7. The process of creating a show

In order to give even more value to the company's work, we may talk about the creation process carried out to reach the final show. Only in this way may we become aware that the moment of the representation is only the evidence of a very intense work that is not seen, but that is there. This process consists of various phases and different moments: the moment of creation (whether it is a work adapted from another that already exists or a new creation), the rehearsals, the scenography, the artistic elements, the costumes, the music, lighting, travel, assembly and disassembly and a long etcetera.

During the process of creating this show, the company did an artistic residency in France. This means that France gives value to the creative process and provides a space and time for artists to work with better quality. In addition, the artists initiate the dialogue and share moments with the children to receive feedback.

Have you ever wondered how artists create their own show? How long do they need for the whole process? Why do you think that in our country there are not the same opportunities as in France for artists to create?



DURING THE PERFORMANCE

We must enjoy this moment very much and **let ourselves be carried away by the story, the music and the effect of the lighting.**

We ask the children to observe very carefully each scene, each detail and the evolution of the behaviour of the two animals. Especially, we ask them to look at the **different feelings** that are emerging.

We also take the opportunity to check whether the dramatizations that we have improvised in the classroom correspond to those that take place throughout the show. Later, in class, we may discuss everything.

At the same time, we will respect the criteria that we have proposed for ourselves on **how we should behave when we are audience.**



AFTER THE SHOW

Through this show and beyond the enjoyment and entertainment, we may think about, reflect on and delve into difference and miscegenation and the infinity of opportunities to learn and share that we have every day. For this reason, we want to share some proposals that may help you or that you may adapt to your interests and even create new ones.

Back in the classroom, we start a **CONVERSATION** that **facilitates and/or complements the understanding of the story**. We talk about where the story happens and who the protagonists are. We may take the opportunity to recover aspects that had arisen in the conversation prior to seeing the show and verify the information.

CONVERSATION may continue to deepen reflection. What are the values that you want to transmit? What have we learned? What has caught our attention the most attention? What feelings do appear? Did we like it? If you had to summarize the show in one word, what would it be? Would you recommend it to someone? What would you say?

1.Reconstruction of the story

With this sequence of photos, we encourage you to reconstruct the story. You may also play to change the order and reinvent it..



AFTER THE SHOW

2. The corners game

Now we suggest that you divide the classroom into four corners, each with a meaning: one of them means **I AGREE**, another **I DO NOT AGREE**, the third **I DO NOT KNOW** and the fourth **I AM THINKING ABOUT IT**.

What will we do? We will read some statements that refer to the show. After listening to each sentence, children should stand in one corner or the other depending on their opinion. After their choice, they may argue the reason for their answer. Listening to arguments from schoolmates, we will allow them to change corners if they have changed their mind.

Affirmations that we suggest:

The squirrel is very mischievous and wants to kick the adult hedgehog out.

The adult hedgehog has a very bad temper, and he does not want to share.

The squirrel and the little hedgehog make friends very quickly.

Both the squirrel and the hedgehog are looking for just a place to live.

The squirrel loves snails.

Both animals like the same things.

Each animal learns from the other.

Being different always causes anger.

Learning from other beings enriches us.

We may also propose sentences to the children and to help them, if necessary, we may start the sentences, so that they only must finish them.

3. Dramatization - If i were...

In groups and on a voluntary basis, we propose to dramatize situations that raise some of the reflections that The Fable of the Squirrel gives us in reference to the richness of difference, to learn from other beings, to coexistence, to self-acceptance, etc.

Hypothetical situations:

- If I were an herbivorous animal and my best friend was a carnivore or vice versa and they invited me to an exquisite meal in their opinion, how would I act?
- If I found an animal that is a predator of my species (for example, if I am a rabbit and my predator, a fox) and they were in mortal danger from an accident about to fall off a cliff), what would I do?
- In order to survive an extreme situation (for example, a flood), how would you help an animal friend who does not have the ability to overcome the situation? (For example, a lizard that needs to swim.)
- If I come across a species that does not take care of the environment (such as humans) and I am a species, not human, but very sustainable (like any animal), what would I do to improve the situation?

Next, if someone who was watching wants to participate, the dramatizations may be repeated and then we discuss them:

AFTER THE SHOW

-Both those of us who watched and those of us interpreting: how did we feel? What has impacted us? What did it suggest to us?

-Let's reflect. Have we ever been immersed in a similar situation? In this case, we will respect the will of the children to share it or not.

If we want to go further with this activity, the children may pose situations that they want to dramatize. To make it anonymous, they may be written on pieces of paper, put them in a box and the teacher may take them out one by one. All the children who want it come out to dramatize.

The activities that we propose below highlight the importance of diversity, the richness of difference, interculturality as a source of respect and learning, acceptance and a positive outlook towards oneself, also, the visualization of the strengths of each one and the willingness to learn from the rest.

4. Time Bank

To the children, we suggest that each one think of some skill, hobby or talent of their own that they would like to share with the rest. In this way, we create a bank of time in the classroom from which everyone can teach what they like and know how to do, and, in turn, the rest can receive it. It may take place freely and for as long as needed or a shared calendar may be organized so that everyone may choose what they want to do.

5. Our strengths

We initiate a dynamic of individual reflection in which each child and schoolteachers may identify with words characteristic (of any kind, whether we like them or not) that we consider defining us. We write them down on a piece of cardboard that we will later hang with a string, so that it is behind us. Next, we move through the space accompanied by pleasant music and children write down, on the card of the others, some positive characteristic that they think that person has. They will write on the opposite side of the card. When the dynamic ends, each one, silently and individually, observes and reads what the rest have told them, comparing it with what each one had written. Thus, we may go into the concept of self-esteem, acceptance and value of the characteristics that each one has. If someone feels like it, they may share with the rest of the group how they feel and their personal reflection.

6. What I like is...

What we like and what we don't. Each one thinks about their hobbies and reflects them on a mural that we have shared in a common space. This may contribute to breaking homogenization and understanding that we may not like the same thing that we must respect it and that it may enrich us.



AFTER THE SHOW

7. Look into eyes

We make two concentric circles, so that children come face to face with a schoolmate. We listen to the song “Tanca els ulls” by Txarango (or any other that is emotional) while the children look into each other's eyes and try to feel what the other person brings them, what they like to share, what we have learned from them, etc. After approximately 30 seconds (or when we deem it appropriate) the adult will give a warning so that the children of the inner circle move clockwise, to cause the changes of partners. Sometimes, if synergies are strong, changes may come naturally and self-regulating.

8. We do mimic

This is a show without words, the message of which reaches us through the bodily and gestural interpretation of the actors and a descriptive music that accompanies what we see. Therefore, we suggest you start from different situations: happy, mystery, fear, game, etc. Interpret with mime what you want to convey.

In this show, we are accompanied by live music, descriptive music that helps understand the plot throughout the play. To work on this music, we propose to **SET A SCENE TO MUSIC**. This may be achieved through different proposals, such as incorporating sound elements. We may think about what sounds could intervene in this precise scene. For example, sounds of birds, water, stream, moving leaves, etc. Next, look for elements, instruments that could imitate these sounds and include them to the music in an orderly way.

You could also set an image or a scene to music, creating your own music. Finally, we may play to set a scene to music, observing it and putting on different music, becoming aware of how its meaning changes depending on the chosen style of music.

9. I create my character (artistic expression)

We start from beings from Greek mythology that mix two or more species and that extract the strengths of each one. For example, centaurs, sphinxes, minotaurs, griffins, mermaids, etc. Inspired by these mythological beings, each child creates their character, crossing two or more different animals. Creation may take place flat (drawing, painting) or volume (modelling with clay, with recycled materials, etc.). This creation may be accompanied by an explanation: why did they choose these animals? What strengths do they have? Why do they think the character could be useful? Finally, they may name their character.

10. Do and undo

The scenography of the La Baldufa shows is usually mobile and changing. By groups and based on the scene of the show or other invented scenes, children must create their scenography. At their fingertips, we will leave boxes of various sizes, so that they can create their scenography, so that they can be modified to give way to new environments. The boxes may be transformed into buildings, walls, mountains, rocks, obstacles, trees, ... and anything else you may think of.

AFTER THE SHOW

11. And how is your family?

As you know, there is not an only family model. Taking advantage of the fact that, in the show, the squirrel acts as the father of the hedgehog that has been orphaned, it could be very interesting each child draws up their own family tree. It may be a simple tree that only includes up to grandmothers and grandfathers.

Everyone may make it with the material and format they want, however, we may provide them with some ideas. You may also propose this activity to do it at home, with the family, and then share it at school, with the rest of the classmates.

12. The fables

There are other activities that could help us delve into the genre of the fable and do a work more focused on the taste for reading and writing, opening the way to imagination and creativity as well.

You may ask what **LITERARY GENRES** we know and what the main characteristics that define them are. Genres such as the story, the legend, the tale, the fable, etc.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FABLE are the following (we can encourage the children to discover them by also thinking about other fables we know and compile the ideas that come up together):

Brevity: Generally, the fable is a short story and with the intention of transmitting a clear and direct teaching that is easily understood.

Protagonism of animals with human characteristics: The fable is always starred in by animals, which have natural characteristics and other human ones, based on the former. The natural ones are related to their physical constitution (strength, speed, ability to fly, type of beak ...), their eating habits or their ability. Human ones have to do with values and vices that bear a certain similarity with customs or manners of the animal.

In the fable, it is customary to confront the characters, basically the protagonist and the antagonist. It is common for the story to be resolved in favour of the animal that appeared to be weaker and giving a lesson to the character considered stronger. Besides, it usually ends with a conciliatory ending in which the two animals make friends.

It transmits teachings, ethical values or a moral reflection: The fable becomes a tool to reflect on and build the values that may guide our way of acting and living in society, because, in the end, there is always a moral conclusion. The fable helps us make a critical assessment of society, to question political decisions, etc. Some of the values that a fable tells us about are acceptance, friendship, trust, care, help, selfishness, jealousy, generosity, lies, respect, etc.

AFTER THE SHOW

13. known fables and others to know

After having talked about the fable and its most important characteristics, we propose to think about fables that we know. There are certain tale stories that they may know, such as: The Hare and the Tortoise, The Lion and the Mouse, The Fox and the Stork, The Ant and the Grasshopper. They are fables.

We encourage you to read some of these fables or any other from the surprising collection The Fables of Aesop, and then, in pairs and in a large group, comment on what reflection we can make based on each one of them.

14. We philosophise... ¿What values do i need to work with?

Acceptance, help, friendship, greed, envy, selfishness, trust, generosity, lies, freedom, obedience, respect, etc. Depending on the need, one or another fable may be worked on.

15. Animals

We think of animals that appear or may appear in a fable. We write a list and then a description of what the physical features, their abilities, their habitat, customs, etc. are. From here, we think about what their positive and negative values may be.

For instance:

Animal	Characteristics	Positive values	Negative values
the fox	Agile Fast	Cunning Intelligent	Deceives Smug

16. I invent a fable

This activity may be done individually or in pairs. We suggest that each child or every couple may invent their own fable.

First, they must think about what they want to talk about, what the value or reflection to which they want to reach is.

Next, they must find which animals will be the protagonists of their story. Therefore, they may recover everything that they have collected in the previous activity and focus on two characters who, initially, have opposite characteristics. Now, they may create the fable.

17. The end. Shall we reinvent?

With the children, we reflect on the end of this fable and on the message it wants to convey to us. Do the two animals end up being friends? What do we think they have learned? Do they live together? If we feel like it, we may come up with a different ending.

RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY

To work on the genre of FABLE, we may consult this teaching dossier of the Departament d'Ensenyament, within the framework of the taste for reading of the academic year 2017/18:

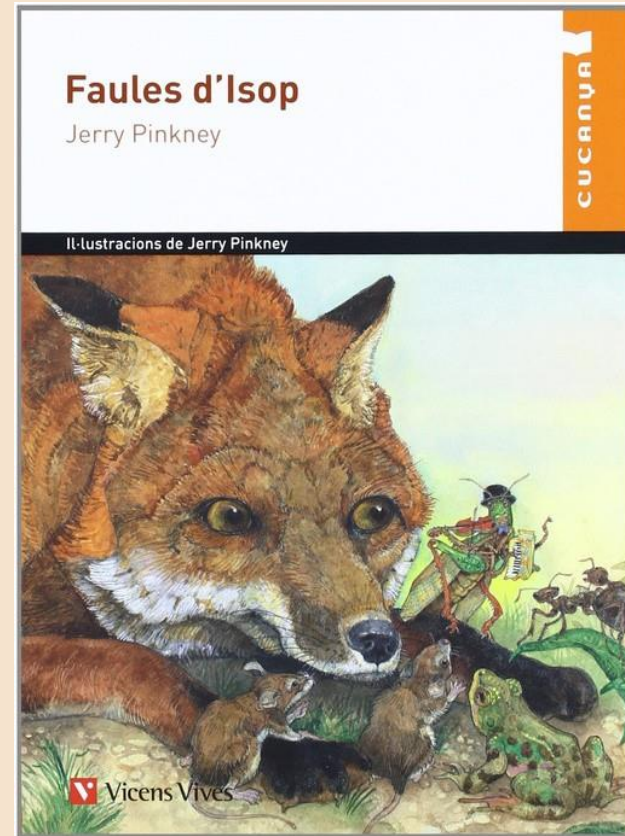
http://xtec.gencat.cat/web/.content/projectes/lectura/gustperlalectura/materialdidactic/documents/primaria/DOSSIER_recursos_faules_MU.pdf

The Fables of Aesop, by Jerry Pinkney. The Fables of Aesop are a set of prose fables attributed to Aesop, the Greek writer who lived between the end of the 7th century BC. and the beginning of the 6th century BC., probably, native to the region of Phrygia.

Through these fables, we may work on values such as friendship, cooperation, respect, self-esteem and many others.

Article, Diari ARA, October 2020, Enric Blasi: Ser tolerants, respectar la diferència i aprendre coses dels altres, ens fa millors:

https://criatures.ara.cat/blogs/creixent-amb-escena-familiar/enric-blassi-tolerants-respectar-diferencia_132_3063362.html



RECOMMENDED AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES

SHORT FILMS:

Monsterbox. It tells us about an indestructible friendship. Nothing is more powerful than appreciating the differences between beings and accepting them.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OczEHXRU9WU>

Boundin. To reflect on self-esteem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1LEhmhxS0g>

For The Birds. Various reflections may be drawn on tolerance and the importance that each person has for themselves, so that, from the difference, we learn to draw the virtues that each one has.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MzimNEikhWM>

La flor más grande del mundo. Based on a story by José Saramago. It is a cry for solidarity and human relationships, in a world in which lack of ideals, selfishness and individualism prevail over other feelings. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1RiwA4r8k8k&t=51s>

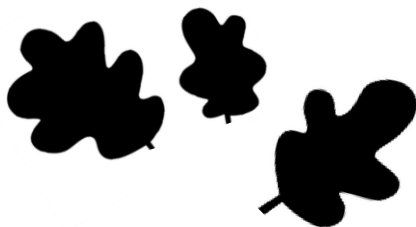
The Butterfly Circus. Talk about values like respect and dignity. It also raises chimeras that, certainly, all of us have had: acceptance of others, breaking the barriers that we put on and that prevent us from making our wish come true, etc.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od2lg1ZC20s>

Por cuatro esquinitas de nada. Acceptance and appreciation of the difference. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBjka_zQBdQ

DOCUMENTARY FILM:

Sur le chemin de l'école. Sponsored by the UNESCO and with the support of UNICEF, this documentary talks about the heroism of four children from different countries: Samuel from India, Carlitos from Argentina, Jackson from Kenya and Zahira from Morocco. Four great stories about the adversities that they must face daily in order to get to school and that will be of great help to know other ways of living on our planet.



4. ARTISTIC SHEET

Authorship: Jokin Oregi & La Baldufa: Enric Blasi, Emiliano Pardo, Carles Pijuan

Direction: Jokin Oregi

Music: Óscar Roig

Lighting design: Anjos Fernández

Set design: Carles Pijuan

Costume design and dressmaking: Rosa Solé

Set construction: Juan Manuel Recio, Ferran López, Xevi Planas, Olga Cuito, Carles Pijuan

Actors:

· Hedgehog: Carles Pijuan or Ferran López

· Squirrel: Emiliano Pardo or Enric Blasi

Musician: Pau Elias

Sound and light technician: Anjos Fernández

Production: Enric Blasi, Emiliano Pardo, Amàlia Atmetlló, Maria Capell

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