Instructors Guide
About the Puppets

Terry Snyder of Richmond, Virginia created the puppets used in *Beauty and the Beast*. They are very large marionettes, operated by strings and rods from above the puppets. You will see the puppeteers (the people operating the puppets) onstage. They are in costume and besides portraying the puppets characters they narrate the story.
The Story

A Merchant lives in a country home with his three daughters, Pride, Vanity and Beauty. The youngest, Beauty, is kind and pure of heart; while the two elders, Vanity and Pride, are wicked, selfish, vain and secretly taunt and treat Beauty more like a servant than a sister. The merchant hears that one of the trade ships that he had thought lost at sea has landed and he plans to go see if the goods he had on the ship are safe. Before leaving, he asks his daughters if they wish for him to bring any gifts back for them. The oldest two ask for perfume, fans, jewels and the finest dresses. Beauty is satisfied with the promise of a rose, as none grow in their part of the country. The merchant, to his dismay, finds that his ship's cargo has been seized to pay his debts, leaving him without money to buy his daughters their presents. On his return, the merchant becomes lost in a forest. Seeking shelter, he enters a dazzling palace. The merchant finds tables inside laden with food and drink, which seem to have been left for him by the palace's invisible owner. The merchant accepts this gift and spends the night there. The next morning as the merchant is about to leave, he sees a rose garden and recalls that Beauty had desired a rose. Upon picking the loveliest rose he can find, the merchant is confronted by a hideous "Beast" who tells him that for taking his most precious possession after accepting his hospitality, the merchant must die. The merchant begs to be set free, arguing that he had only picked the rose as a gift for his youngest daughter. The Beast agrees to let him give the rose to Beauty, but only if he will send Beauty back to him.

The merchant is upset, but accepts this condition. Upon arriving home, he tries to hide the secret from Beauty, but she
pries it from him and willingly goes to the Beast's castle. The Beast receives her graciously and informs her that she is now mistress of the castle, and he is her servant. He gives her lavish clothing and food and carries on lengthy conversations with her. At last, the Beast asks Beauty to marry him, to which she replies that she cannot marry the Beast because she loves him only as a friend.

Eventually Beauty becomes homesick and begs the Beast to allow her to go see her family. He allows it on the condition that she returns exactly a week later. Beauty agrees to this and sets off using a magic ring that the Beast has given her. Her older sisters are surprised to find her well fed and dressed in finery. They are envious when they hear of her happy life at the castle, and, hearing that she must return to the Beast on a certain day, beg her to stay longer. They steal the magic ring so that Beauty cannot return, but Beauty’s father has saved the rose, and that flower magically returns Beauty to the Beast. When she arrives, he is horrified to discover that the Beast is lying half-dead from heartbreak. Beauty weeps over the Beast, saying that she loves him. When he hears those words, the Beast is transformed into a handsome Prince. The Prince tells Beauty that long ago a witch turned him into a hideous beast, and that only by finding true love could the curse be broken. The Prince and Beauty are married and they live happily ever after together.
Before the Show

Read the story of Beauty and the Beast as it appears in this guide, and share it with your students. The Puppet Co. production follows the original version of Beauty and the Beast written by Jeanne-Marie Leprince Beaumont, in France, in about 1746. You and your children, or students, may be more familiar with other versions of the story, in particular the Disney version, which is different in many respects from the original.
After the Show

The story of Beauty and the Beast is filled with the magic of the ring the horse, the rose, and the mirror. But, more importantly it shows the transformative magic of the human spirit. Here are a few ideas for you to discuss with your students about that important element of the story.

1. Each of the merchant’s daughters, Vanity, Pride, and Beauty, is named after a personal quality. Ask your students, if they were to be named after a quality that they possess, what would that name be – and why?

2. Vanity and Pride are bullies. In what ways do they bully Beauty? How does Beauty respond? Bullying is never acceptable behavior, but some of your students may have been bullied. Discuss what the best action is if you think that you are being bullied.

3. It takes Beauty a long time to realize that she loves the Beast. Ask your students what they think the turning point, the moment in which Beauty realized that she loves the Beast, might be – and why it took so long for Beauty to come to it.
Theater Etiquette

A visit to the Puppet Co. Playhouse may be the very first trip to any theatrical performance for some of your students. We want this to be a happy experience for everyone. Before you enter the theater, our House Manager, the person who is responsible for your safety and comfort during the performance, will welcome you, and will inform you about the seating of your group. At some of the performances, one of the performers will come out to introduce the show and remind everyone about theater “manners” using this easy to remember poem:

Please don’t eat, and stay down in you seat.
Don’t walk about, and don’t talk or shout.
Don’t take pictures or touch the display fixtures,
And, if the babies bawl, take them down the hall!

Have a great visit to the Puppet Co. Playhouse!