

# Shakespeare for Kids Production

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*T. G. Scott Elementary School  
Forsyth, Georgia*

The literature of William Shakespeare may seem a few years too advanced for most elementary school students, but not for the thespians at T. G. Scott Elementary School. There, third- through fifth-grade students performed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to increase their appreciation of the classics and improve their language arts, communication, and teamwork skills. Meeting for two and a half hours, once a week, the students spent four months preparing productions for two elementary schools in the district and for the community.

Fourth and fifth graders auditioned for the 25 roles in the play; third through fifth graders participated in the large chorus; and all of the students learned about the play's characters and practiced some of the songs so that they could sing along with the chorus during the show. Students also designed the program cover.

A production of this magnitude required two important ingredients: administrative support and lots of family involvement. A parent coordinator set up committees of parents for publicity, costumes, sets, and refreshments, developed a phone tree to facilitate communication, and kept in close contact with the production team to help out if necessary. Parent volunteers assisted students with learning lines, made costumes and sets, publicized the performances, and brought both refreshments and the children to rehearsals on time.

The community invested a great deal of effort into the production as well. A t-shirt company designed shirts for the students and a sign to hang on the main street in town; a

community theater group provided some of the props; and a doctor operated the sound system. Newspaper ads, the school newsletter, and the t-shirt company's sign publicized the shows.

Between students, parents, staff, and the community, over 1,000 people spent more than 500 hours to produce T. G. Scott Elementary's rendition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In the future, the students will continue to perform because, as one person involved with the play put it, "the parents and the community develop a sense of pride in the students' being part of something so unique for children," and "the play brings families and the community together."

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