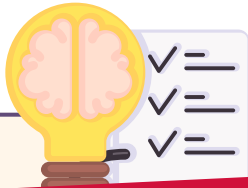


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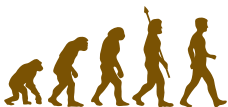
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Remembrance Day Plays Curriculum Map



Winner of "THE WRITERS AWARD" from the EFTO for 2014!

Engage Students with Powerful Historical Plays

Theatre is a transformative teaching and learning tool, and our collection of historical plays brings the stories of wartime struggles, sacrifices, and triumphs to life for students in grades 5 to 12. These age-appropriate plays cover significant events from World War I, World War II, and the Korean War, providing a unique opportunity to engage students in historical thinking through real events, names, and places.

Plays Included:

- **Letters From the Great War, 1914-1918** (Grades 7 to 12) 
- **Waiting for D-Day, 1939-1945** (Grades 5 to 12) 
- **Remembering Korea, 1950-1953** (Grades 7 to 12)
- **A Trio of Wars, A Gift of Peace** (Grades 5 to 12) 
- **Four Questions About Peace** (Grades 5 to 12) 

Each play includes scenes from both the home front and overseas, making history come alive for both participants and audiences. The comprehensive teacher guide offers practical tips for auditions, production, staging, costumes, props, and more, ensuring a successful and engaging experience for all.

Every November 11th, schools across Canada hold Remembrance Day Services to honor the tragedy of war and the benefits of peace. However, teaching the history of Canada's war efforts can be challenging due to the sensitive nature of the topic and the lack of coverage in the elementary curriculum. This resource helps educators provide a meaningful understanding of Canada's unique wartime history, transforming the brief observance into an imaginative and educational experience.

Why Choose Our Plays?

- **Age-Appropriate Content:** Tailored for students in grades 5 to 12. 🎓
- **Historical Accuracy:** Incorporates real events, names, and places. 🕒
- **Engaging and Educational:** Helps students develop a deeper understanding of Canada's wartime history. 🌟
- **Comprehensive Teacher Guide:** Includes everything needed for a successful production. 🎭

Veterans have praised these plays for honoring their experiences and bringing history to life for younger generations. As one veteran, Patrick O'Keeffe, said, "This has been a great tribute for us veterans, because it brings home our experiences. My father was in the first war, and I was in the second. Now my grandchildren will understand."

Transform your Remembrance Day observance with our powerful and educational plays and help students appreciate the bravery and sacrifices of Canada's veterans. 🍁

Introduction & Planning Notes:

Includes:

- Why a Play for Remembrance Day?
- Teacher's Guide
- Making it Work for You
- Audition Application
- Dramatic Skills
- Costumes, Props and Sets
- Staging Your Production
- The Ceremony of Remembrance
- Reflections on my Learning
- Double Use Rubric – Teacher and Student
- Classroom and Research Bibliography
- Acknowledgements

Five Plays:

Letters From the Great War, 1914-1918 (Grades 7 to 12)

Plot Summary:

The play opens in **Scene One: The Call** in a town square somewhere in Canada where young Canadians in three separate groupings announce their intention of ‘joining up.’ They are: youthful scholar Michael, determined Black Canadian Jeremiah Jones, and spirited Grace MacPherson. In trying to convince a loved one they are doing the ‘right thing,’ they each promise to write home. As they join the enlistment line, the choir in the town square sings “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary.”

The “I’ll write home as often as I can” theme provides the structure for the rest of the play, in which the characters deliver their ‘letters’ in a series of interconnected monologues, highlighting and personalizing different aspects of the war experience. The setting is indicated by the scene title. The three young Canadians who were introduced in Scene 1 are integrated throughout the play. **Scene 2: The Trenches** ends in a modern dance entitled “No Man’s Land Waltz.” **Scene 3: The Munitions Factory at The Home Front** concludes with the singing of “Till the Boys Come Home” (Keep the Home Fires Burning). Michael, Jeremiah, and Grace meet up in **Scene 4: The Hospital**, which ends with a moving choral rendition of “In Flanders Fields.”

Michael, Jeremiah, Grace, and Soldier Talbot Papineau lead **Scene 5: Ceremony of Remembrance**. The Cast and Crew enter the stage during the Honour March to solemn but moving music. The laying of the wreath is followed by the Last Post and the Moment of Silence, which ends with the singing of “O Canada.”

Waiting for D-Day, 1939-1945 (Grades 5 to 12)

Plot Summary:

After the choir sings “Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy of Company B,” **Scene 1: The Homefront** reveals street life in a busy Canadian neighbourhood which has been affected, like so many, by the war. While children’s play is absorbed with aspects of war, the Russell family discuss the world situation on June 5, 1944, as Maggie and neighbour Francine prepare to work the night shift at the munitions factory. Joe, the twelve-year-old son of Betty and absent soldier Captain Paul, borrows his Grandpa’s WWI helmet and leads the neighbourhood children in an after-dinner game of “Storming Fortress Europe.” He exhorts different groupings of friends to take on varied roles using a strategy that Grandpa himself says “General Eisenhower and the rest of the Allied Command should listen to.” Child paratroopers drop behind enemy lines using linen napkins filched from the laundry line. An armful of toy boats is lined up to represent

various types of ships in the Royal Navy convoy. The neighbourhood infantry is preparing their attack just as Mothers start calling their children in for bedtime. Joe and his mother Betty end the scene looking at the moon thinking of their loved one as Captain Paul is on the other side of the ocean (stage) looking at the moon thinking of them. The choir sings *"We'll Meet Again."*

Scene 2: On the Convoy Ship opens with General Eisenhower, General Sir Bernard Montgomery and General Harry Crerar making the decision to commence with Operation Overlord despite the bad weather. Eisenhower relays his message to the troops. "...The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people march with you." The soldiers tease each other about their "sea legs" and express varied motives for joining the army as well as differing attitudes about the task in front of them. Captain Paul and his assistants on deck talk about the immense resources gathered to begin the fight and then give a pep talk to the soldiers. The soldiers are emboldened and ready to go, leaving the performance space by storming down the centre isle and through the audience.

Scene 3: The Dance of Juno Beach is a modern dance symbolizing the battle with its three groupings of support: Air Force, Navy, and Infantry.

Scene 4: The Invasion Has Begun returns to the home front, where Joe returns from his morning newspaper run with the exciting news that the Invasion has finally successfully started. The family gathers around the paper to read the firsthand reports which are based on actual newspaper articles. They are united in their hope that this is the beginning of the end. The choir sings *"Let There Be Peace on Earth"* by Jill Jackson and Sy Miller.

Scene 5: The Ceremony of Remembrance is led by Joe, General Crerar, Betty, and Soldier Pat. The Cast and Crew enter the stage during the Honour March to solemn but moving music like *"Hymn to the Fallen"* from the movie *"Saving Private Ryan."* The laying of the wreath is followed by the *Last Post* and the *Moment of Silence*, which ends with the singing of *"O Canada."*

Remembering Korea, 1950-1953 (Grades 7 to 12)

Plot Summary:

Tony and his gang of friends, Mathieu, Vern, Digger, and brothers Charlie and Brian are having an end-of summer high school reunion picnic in **Scene 1: The News** before they head off to jobs or further schooling. Their future directions seem clear. The party is interrupted by an important CBC radio broadcast by Prime Minister St. Laurent urging all able-bodied men to join the Korean War effort. The whole gang decides to sign up together for a variety of different reasons, much to the anguish of Tony's mother and younger sister Katie, and the pride of their girlfriends Irene and Susan.

In **Scene 2: Recruitment Centre** Colonel Jim Stone and his cohort discuss whether this "action" will be more like the disaster of Hong Kong in '41 or the success of Italy in the late 40's. In either case, Col. Stone resolves that the soldiers will get the training they need. The choir hints at the distance between families with the song "*Goodnight Irene*." The gang of new soldiers and their friends hold a **Scene 3: Jive Goodbye Dance Party**.

Once in **Scene 4: Korea** the soldiers are greeted by the strange but true sight of a choir singing "*If I'd known You Were Coming I'd Have Baked a Cake*." They are surprised by the "Land of the Morning Calm" which appears both less calm and more mountainous than expected. Bill Boss, a Canadian war correspondent, covers the story of the Battle of Kap'yong (*Gapyeong*), where this group of young soldiers figures prominently. As a counterpoint to the awarding of the US Presidential Distinguished Unit Citation for their efforts in this crucial battle to save Seoul we learn that Charlie is likely dead.

In **Scene 5: Seoul** Bill Boss then meets up with a youthful Pierre Berton who is interviewing Red Cross worker Muriel White. Berton also interviews Mrs. Tak, a Korean refugee, with the assistance of translator Dickie and Tony who are momentarily on re-assigned duties from the front.

During **Scene 6: Night Patrol** the Chinese propaganda machine broadcasts its message across the valley as the soldiers take a break. They dream out loud of home and peace. Later, it becomes clear that Digger, who has just decided to ask Susan to be his "girl" and who is on his last night patrol, has been killed. Throughout, Katie's monologues about what she reads or doesn't read in the newspaper provide a counterpoint to how the Korean War is fading from view at home.

When the remaining friends finally reach **Scene 7: Homecoming**, no crowd greets them except the family and loyal girlfriends. Susan collapses when she hears the news that Digger has been killed just before the Armistice. Despite their sorrow the group confirms what their sacrifice meant to the democratic “free world” and the South Korean people. The choir sings “*Let There Be Peace on Earth.*”

The play is followed by **Scene 8: Ceremony of Remembrance**, which includes a reflection on what the Korean and other wars of Canadian involvement have meant to us. All the Cast and Crew enter the stage during the Honour March to solemn but moving music. The laying of the wreath is followed by the Last Post and the Moment of Silence, which ends with the singing of “*O Canada.*”

A Trio of Wars, A Gift of Peace (Grades 5 to 12)

Plot Summary:

Three Storytellers, who are suggestive of angels or a modern version of “Father Time” follow three families through the First, Second, and Korean Wars, highlighting the similarities and differences between the experiences. The play is visually organized along a timeline with the action for each era and family occurring at the same spot on the stage. The conversation between the storytellers is interspersed to clarify historical details as well as articulate general ideas about war and peace at a level appropriate for children.

The three family groupings introduced in **Scene 1: The Call to Enlist** include a WWI family whose university-bound son willingly goes off to what is expected to be a short and adventurous war; a WWII working class family whose carpenter father joins the army due to a growing worry that Hitler and Hirohito will overcome us all; and a 1950’s picnicking family whose son joins up for Korea in memory of his father who died in WWII. The choir sings “*It’s a Long Way to Tipperary.*”

Scene 2: The Reasons Why has the three storytellers comparing the world to a playground and the differing contexts of the wars to age-appropriate playground examples. This scene ends in a stomp-inspired “Bully Dance” symbolizing the fascist bullies of WWII.

The men who signed up in Scene 1 re-appear in **Scene 3: The War Front** where each group emphasizes what the war is like for them, mentioning details of particular battles or aspects of the battlefields specific to that war.

Scene 4: The Home Front explores the deprivations, efforts and worries of those assisting the war effort from afar. The choir opens the scene with “*Keep the Home Fires Burning.*” The sce-

ne ends with the cessation of hostilities and the gift of peace. Of the three men, the Korean soldier safely returns home, the WWII father is seriously wounded, and the WWI son's death is symbolized by the delivery of the telegram and broken watch delivered to his mother.

The Storytellers briefly discuss the active meaning of "peace" from a child's perspective and lead the **Scene 5: Ceremony of Remembrance**. All the Cast and Crew enter the stage during the Honour March to solemn but moving music. The laying of the wreath is followed by the Last Post and the Moment of Silence, which ends with the singing of "O Canada."

Four Questions About Peace (Grades 5 to 12)

Plot Summary:

The play opens with two student narrators observing the signs of November. "As soon as November begins there are certain things you can expect to see. Like bright red poppies on dark coats, old war movies on TV, grey skies and bare trees that seem to match the stories your grandparents tell you. It makes you think a lot. It makes you wonder. And questions just kind of POP into your head!" With that, four dancers, dressed in question marks, pop out of the audience to a lighthearted yet thought provoking instrumental music piece. The ballet-style Dance of the Four Questions is the visual representation of the Narrator's deliberations. These four questions provide a framework for the scenes which follow. At the same time the questions are imaginatively answered through improvisation-style dramatizations or dramatic re-enactments.

Scene 1: What does "peace" really mean?

Three basic peaceful scenes are explored – in the family, in the playground, in society – each of which ends in the opposite of peace. For example, apparent family harmony evolves into a series of disagreements which concludes when the parent finally yells, "Can't we have any peace and quiet around here!"

Scene 2: How did our peacekeeper reputation begin?

Lester B. Pearson steps on stage to recount how his earlier experiences in WWI and WWII lead him to work for peace. The crisis over the Suez Canal, where he effectively halts diplomats from Israel, France, and Britain from going to war with Egypt's Colonel Nasser, is re-enacted.

Scene 3: Where do Canadians keep the peace?

Soldiers are seen performing a variety of peacekeeping, and peacemaking duties in six

vignettes which take place all over the world. These include Cyprus (1992), Golan Heights (1991), Namibia (1990), and the Balkans (1991). As well, reporter Christie Blatchford makes an appearance when she interviews soldiers involved in de-mining activities in Afghanistan in 2006. Directors may also consider adding a vignette to reflect current world locations of Canadian involvement.

Scene 4: How can we make peace in our world?

The actors from Scene 1 explore each of the scenarios – in the home, on the playground, in society – in a concrete context related to students’ lives. In this way they provide relevant answers that promote Canadian values and world peace.



Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario
Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants
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Ottawa-Carleton teacher Barbara Brockmann wins ETFO Writer's Award
Her Remembrance Day plays bring war history alive for young students.

For Immediate Release – August 12, 2014

TORONTO - The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) has presented Ottawa-Carleton teacher Barbara Brockmann with its 2014 Writer's Award for her book of five plays that brings wartime history alive for students in Grades 5-12.

The award is presented to an active ETFO member or a group of members to recognize published or unpublished works. Barbara's *Remembrance Day Plays for Schools and Communities* was published by S and S Learning Materials in 2010.

Currently a teacher at Glashan Public School, Barbara views Canadian history as a cornerstone for helping students find a 'place' in their country. Her five plays dramatize the struggles, sacrifices and triumphs that Canadians from all walks of life experienced during wartime at home and overseas. Along with providing a teacher's guide and production tips, the play series incorporates real events, names and places to bring students and audiences closer to lived history.

Barbara has a distinguished record in projects that engage students in Canadian history. She was a member of the 2011 and 2012 selection committee for the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History which she won in 2002. Barbara has served as an educational consultant for national educational historical projects related to subjects including Black Canadian history and connecting students with oral history.

Barbara is a past recipient of Ottawa-Carleton District School Board's Excellence in the Arts Events Award for "Ebony Road", based on her unpublished work *Ebony Road: An African Canadian Journey*. She recently helped start a Social Studies History Geography Committee with the Ottawa-Carleton Elementary Teachers Local in anticipation of new approaches in the curriculum, and the 150th anniversary of Canadian confederation.

"Barbara's passion for history is helping students develop a thirst for understanding human nature and the workings of the wider world around them," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "Theatre is a powerful way to bring history, social studies and geography alive, and meet curriculum expectations in a meaningful way."

The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario represents 76,000 elementary public school teachers and education professionals across the province and is the largest teacher federation in Canada.





Why a Play for Remembrance Day?

Every November 11th schools across our country hold Remembrance Day Services. Poems are read, songs are sung, a trumpet is played, and children are exhorted to both remember the tragedy of war and the benefits of peace. But beyond those general concepts, what exactly are they asked to Remember?

Elementary teachers are often uncomfortable teaching the history of Canada's war efforts because of the horrors invariably connected with warfare. Some have little general or specific knowledge of Canada's participation in wars -- due, in part, to the fact that the eras of WWI, WWII, and the Korean War are not usually part of the Grade 1 to Grade 8 curricula across Canada.

Every year teachers scramble to reinvent the Remembrance Day "wheel". And every year the focus is on the 'Poppy', 'Sacrifice,' and 'Peace.' In schools with new immigrant populations, teachers sometimes emphasize current events and the wish for peace in some of their students' conflict laden countries of origin. While this is a well intentioned approach to a difficult subject, it overlooks the rich and moving history of Canada's unique experience of war.

Recognizing these challenges we must remember that there is one day a year – in fact one hour of that one day – where educators across the country have the opportunity of helping younger students develop a meaningful understanding of how the experience of War has played an integral part in painting the canvas of Canadian life.

Remembrance Day Plays for Schools and Communities is an **age-appropriate** platform that allows educators to transform this brief yet emotional observance into an imaginative experience of Canada's proud wartime history. While recognizing the sadness and sacrifices of war, these plays honour the bravery and the triumphs of our fallen and our Veterans, their experiences and the experiences of their families and communities.

Theatre serves as a particularly powerful teaching/learning tool. Not only do actors, singers, and dancers directly engage in specific 'roles' within the context of wartime events, an audience of children, parents, and veterans witness a synopsis of the conflict and its social and cultural effects. The past comes alive. What has been especially gratifying is the response of veterans who see children re-enacting and honouring their experiences.



"This has been a great tribute for us veterans, because it brings home our experiences. My father was in the first war, and I was in the second. Now my grandchildren will understand."
– Veteran Patrick O'Keeffe.

"I'll tell the Korean War Vets that the Korean War isn't forgotten any longer." – Veteran Les Peate, President of the Korea Veterans Association of Canada.



Teacher's Guide

Making It Work For You:

- Share the directorial talents around! Be flexible with the script and open to the hidden talents of your students and staff. Invite colleagues to take on an aspect of directing (choir or dance) and production (costumes, sound or set construction). Past productions have included primary teachers with classroom choirs, and a Grade 8 gym teacher directing a 'jive dance' scene. Talented students with dance training have done their own choreography, while students in cadet bands have added military drumbeats.
- Consider the population of students with whom you will stage the play. By using only your own class or only one grade level (all the Grade 6's for example) you may be able to use class time for rehearsals and evaluate performances for a drama mark. In this way you might want to integrate the play's content with a social studies or a language arts unit. On the other hand, if you choose to do the play on a school wide basis – which will require extra-curricular time – this will allow a broader group of students to become involved. In addition, the autumn is a good time to stage a production while meeting the needs of the school to have a memorable Remembrance Day Ceremony.
- Auditions allow you to view the range of student talents and shows prospective actors that a production requires commitment

Auditions: Round One:

It is possible to audition about 30 students over the lunch hour. Students fill out an 'Audition Card' as part of the process. This simply adds a 'gravitas' to the proceedings, but also gives information on background experience.

Audition Application

Name: _____ Grade: _____

1. Have you ever performed in front of an audience before? Briefly describe it:

2. What is your experience with drama, both in AND outside of school?

3. Circle the types of positions you are interested in:

Acting speaking role

Backstage Crew

Acting non-speaking role

Sound Crew

Choir

Dance

Production Crew (program, front of house, sets)



At the audition, students are given a choice of a scenario that might be found in the play. For example: a brother and sister are having a squabble; a grandparent is complimenting the other grandparent who is at a domestic task; a nurse is tending to a wounded soldier; two soldiers are talking of home before heading out on night patrol. Emphasize use of mime, voice projection, and remembering to face the audience. In pairs, students have five to ten minutes to prepare a one to two minute skit. During their presentations, look especially for body movement and character interpretation, skills which are more complex to teach. Keep three piles of audition slips: Definitely / Shows Promise / Consider for Group Scene.

Auditions: Round Two:

These auditions involve ‘call backs’ as you start to place students in specific roles. Actors are put in groups and given selections from the script. At this stage you are looking for group dynamics, physical attributes, as well as personal interpretation of characters. Once the final cast selections are in place, rehearsals can begin.

Generally, these plays are written to allow for the use of a maximum number of student actors: crowd scenes really are crowds! In this way, no student is ever ‘cut’ from the production if they really want to participate.

Dramatic Skills

- Emphasize the **ensemble nature of theatre** where everyone’s efforts to make the story ‘live’ on stage has equal value. Affirm that **there are no small roles, only small actors**.
- Teach **key dramatic skills** to all your actors. These include: **tableau structure** (both interesting body posture and effective freeze); **effective body movement**; **consistent blocking that avoids upstaging the other actors**; **loud, slow and clear voice projection**; **fully facing the audience when it’s time to talk** (even if in a conversation with another character). These are the skills that will lift your production to a higher level and allow the story to come through.
- **Voice projection is the most important dramatic skill**. Despite the increasing use of hanging and clip on microphones, skills like **enunciation**, **pacing of speech**, and **loud voice projection** are critically important. Loudness and a good pace tend to go hand in hand: it’s hard to speak both loud and fast. Use voice exercises. Build up awareness of who has a good voice in your cast, and how they do it – then use them as a model to improve everyone’s projection and enunciation.
- Tell students of the **difference** in your **role** as a ‘**teacher**’ and your role as a ‘**director**’. Being a director means you will be giving explicit directions – like a sports coach, instead of gentle suggestions – like a teacher! This means that when working with one group, others in the scene are expected to pay attention and listen, as the directions will likely impact their performances too! It also means they can learn from each other’s strengths. Making this clear at the beginning of the process lets your budding actors know to what they can expect, adds to the creative experience, and saves hurt feelings (theirs) and frazzled nerves (yours).
- Acting is like writing: it requires changes in each ‘draft’ as the process unfolds, until the role reveals exactly what the director and the actors mean.



Costumes, Props and Sets

- **Costumes** can be easily put together by using a variety of clothing styles that are available in second hand shops and peoples' closets. Use internet research to get the 'feel' of clothing styles from different eras. Choose simple footwear in neutral colours and avoid neon brights in sneakers.
- **Soldiers' Costumes:** Army and Navy Surplus stores, local museums, Cadet organizations, local collectors, parents, the Legion or local Veterans organizations may be a source of costumes or authentic props. Another approach is to start with any Khaki clothing, easily available in second hand stores and family closets and add dimensions of costume which are particular to each era (see chart). Plastic helmets can often be purchased cheaply in dollar or toy stores. Soldier's foot wear should be dark boots. In previous productions, students have used a key piece of clothing or equipment, like a gas mask or kit bag, which belonged to a relative and have been lovingly passed down.

World War I	World War II	Korean War	Peacekeepers
• heavy wool clothing; jackets are over the hip • calves wrapped in khaki bandages called 'putees' • shirts tucked in • broad WWI helmets • props: sandbags made of burlap and stuffed with newspaper	• heavy wool clothing in a different style than WWI: jackets were like waist length bomber jackets • WWII style helmets • knapsacks or kit bags filled with newspaper	• soldiers wore same uniforms as WWII • heavily laden down with provisions and knapsacks • winter gear	• have started wearing camouflage styles • outfits would depend on the climate of the location • peacekeepers wear signature light blue baseball caps with UN insignia

- **Guns as Props:** The dilemma: Boys like to use 'toy guns', while teachers feel nervous with guns of any kind in a school setting. You can have a supply of simple wooden guns made from a single template and add to your collection as the need arises. You can even use heavy cardboard painted appropriately. The golden rule for actors with prop guns is that they are never pointed towards the audience and are always pointed up high or down low.
- **Keep sets simple.** These plays are usually staged on minimal sets with props that are readily available or easily manufactured.

Staging Your Production

- **Use all available entrances and exits both on and off the stage in the performance area.** Keep things exciting by having the actors, especially the soldiers, go through the audience 'on patrol' and out of alternate exits. This is effective during the War Front scenes and has proven one of the main reasons many boys come out for the production!
- **Music** is a critical part of your production. It has power to communicate an era, a mood, an emotion or an idea. Suggestions for choral pieces connected to specific eras are included within the plays. Many teachers have favourite choral pieces about war and peace which you may



substitute or students might have ideas for current tunes with appropriate lyrics. As well, film soundtracks hold great possibility for instrumental mood enhancers, as background to the soldiers on patrol or as musical interludes to set a tone between scenes. Some of my long time favourites are the soundtracks from: Master and Commander, Saving Private Ryan, and Titanic. You can also simply search for “Instrumental Battle Music” on YouTube. Remember to give credit in your program.

- **Programs** help the audience understand the format of the event and provide a nice keepsake for the performers and their parents. Programs can be double sided on 8.5” x 14” paper, folded in half and usually feature the following:
 - Title page with a drawing by a student(s) on the theme of the play and the Playwright’s name, as well as production dates and directors.
 - List of scenes, including choir and dance numbers and the Ceremony of Remembrance.
 - A list of the cast, crew, choir and dancers, by classroom, by order of appearance, or alphabetically.
 - Acknowledgements, especially of the Veterans and their families as well as helpful parent volunteers, school staff or community suppliers.
- **Time requirements to stage production** depend on your personal preference as a director. With willing performers and a sharing of directorial roles between choir, dance, and drama, it is possible to stage a production in a shorter, more intense, period of between three to four weeks. Each play and ceremony generally run between 50 to 70 minutes.

Choose students who are organized and observant to be in your tech and backstage crew. They will need to know their cues and be prepared to meet them.

- Consider doing multiple performances. While these plays are primarily meant to provide a memorable Remembrance Day observance for your school, they can be staged for a wider audience. For example, consider a performance before November 11 for other schools or residents of a local Seniors Home, and for the community on the evening of Remembrance Day. Save the main November 11 performance for your own school; starting at 10:00 a.m. and aiming for an approximate 11 o’clock conclusion.
- If you need to cover your costs, collect donations or charge a nominal fee at public performances. You might even consider donating your fees to a worthy charity for the families of Canadian Soldiers, or to an international charity helping children who are victims of war like War child, or Free the Children.



Letters from the Great War: Scene 4: The Hospital



The Ceremony of Remembrance

The Ceremony of Remembrance follows the same format for each play. This creates a sense of ritual over the years, and makes a link from the historical era of the play to the same reflective moment of remembrance.

Aspects of the ceremony include:

- **A Gravestone:**

To make one, begin by Googling the internet under “Commonwealth War Graves Commission” (images) to get the correct image of the maple leaf used. Enlarge the image and trace lightly onto a styrofoam or cardboard gravestone shape. Using acrylic paint (a mix of yellow and black makes an effective khaki green colour) paint the maple leaf and “Lest We Forget / Nous nous souvenons” beneath. Due to the multi-faith nature many school environments, do not add the image of the Christian cross. (Note: An inexpensive source of Styrofoam in the right size and shape of a gravestone is sale-priced Halloween cemetery props! Cover the gruesome Halloween side with brown paper, and use the flat surface of the back for your Gravestone.)

- **The Format:**

Curtains open to reveal the gravestone in the centre and four actors evenly spaced with two on each side across the front of the stage. The actors speak their lines. Once they say “We remember and we say thank you,” the *Honour March* begins. Music, which is solemn but powerfully moving - like “*Hymn to the Fallen*” from the movie “*Saving Private Ryan*” – is played. The entire cast and crew enter the stage in a dignified and gracious manner four at a time. They walk straight across the back wall of the stage from the wings. They turn sharply towards the audience and walk slowly forward to line up behind the front four actors flanking the headstone. When all of the cast and crew are quietly on stage, making four long lines of performers still in costume, the last person to enter walks up the centre to lay the wreath in front of the gravestone. This may be a Veteran, a student with a personally meaningful connection to the era of the play, or an actor playing a key family or soldier role. Once the wreath is laid that student says

“PLEASE STAND”.

It is followed by:

- **BUGLE CALL:** The Last Post
- **MOMENT OF SILENCE**
 - The Moment of Silence is ended when the wreath-layer says,
“Please join us in the singing of ‘O Canada’.”
 - **All sing “O Canada”**
 - **Curtains close.** The performance and Ceremony of Remembrance is ended.



A TRIO OF WARS: A GIFT OF PEACE

A Play and A Ceremony

Suitable for Performance by: Grades 5 to 12



Plot Summary:

Three Storytellers, who are suggestive of angels or a modern version of “Father Time” follow three families through the First, Second, and Korean Wars, highlighting the similarities and differences between the experiences. The play is visually organized along a timeline with the action for each era and family occurring at the same spot on the stage. The conversation between the storytellers is interspersed to clarify historical details as well as articulate general ideas about war and peace at a level appropriate for children.

The three family groupings introduced in **Scene 1: The Call to Enlist** include a WWI family whose university-bound son willingly goes off to what is expected to be a short and adventurous war; a WWII working class family whose carpenter father joins the army due to a growing worry that Hitler and Hirohito will overcome us all; and a 1950’s picnicking family whose son joins up for Korea in memory of his father who died in WWII. The choir sings “*It’s a Long Way to Tipperary*.”

Scene 2: The Reasons Why has the three storytellers comparing the world to a playground and the differing contexts of the wars to age-appropriate playground examples. This scene ends in a stomp-inspired “Bully Dance” symbolizing the fascist bullies of WWII.

The men who signed up in Scene 1 re-appear in **Scene 3: The War Front** where each group emphasizes what the war is like for them, mentioning details of particular battles or aspects of the battlefields specific to that war.

Scene 4: The Home Front explores the deprivations, efforts and worries of those assisting the war effort from afar. The choir opens the scene with “*Keep the Home Fires Burning*.” The scene ends with the cessation of hostilities and the gift of peace. Of the three men, the Korean soldier safely returns home, the WWII father is seriously wounded and the WWI son’s death is symbolized by the delivery of the telegram and broken watch delivered to his mother.

The Storytellers briefly discuss the active meaning of “peace” from a child’s perspective and lead the **Scene 5: Ceremony of Remembrance**. All the Cast and Crew enter the stage during the Honour March to solemn but moving music. The laying of the wreath is followed by the Last Post and the Moment of Silence, which ends with the singing of “O Canada.”



Acting Roles:

Speaking Roles: 28 individual roles

Group scenes for additional non-speaking roles:

- marketplace opening
- soldiers in the wars
- factory workers
- telegram delivery man

Music/Choral Options:

Choir: *“It’s a Long Way to Tipperary”* by Jack Judge and Harry Williams

Choir: *“Till the Boys Come Home” (Keep the Home Fires Burning)* by Lena Guilbert Ford and Ivor Novello

Choir: *“Une Colombe”* by Celine Dion

Honour March: *“Hymn to the Fallen”* from the movie *“Saving Private Ryan”*

Dance Options:

“No Man’s Land Waltz” : a modern dance to jolting instrumental music emphasizing the madness of trench warfare, and the tragedy of this war in particular.

[Previous performances: Rockcliffe Park P.S. and Glashan P.S. Ottawa, Ontario. Directed by Barbara Brockmann (2005, 2008, 2012); WWI Scenes at the Sunset Ceremony, Vigil 1914-1918 Project, National War Memorial, November 10, 2008]

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

*In order of appearance. Roles with full names are based on real people.
Use the character list below to record the names of your cast members!*

Opening Market Scene, WWI: *Actors are dressed in WWI clothing styles. This is a flexible scene which can be packed with as many or few actors you have available.*

Newspaper Boy: _____

Enlistment Officers: _____

Market Sellers: _____

Singers: _____



Scenario Groups:

- a) **“Look for the good” Group:** (*children playing with a ball*) _____

- b) **“Be welcoming” Group:** (*children with school books*) _____

- c) **“Accept responsibility” Group:** (*adults passing in the marketplace*) _____

- d) **“Be generous” Group:** (*apple vendor and two to three shabbily dressed children*) _____

- e) **“Think for yourself” Group:** (*3 workers carrying lumber or briefcases, and a few officers at an enlistment table*) _____

- f) **“Solve problems with words” Group:** _____

Storytellers:

Storyteller 1: _____

Storyteller 2: _____

Storyteller 3: _____

The storytellers are dressed in shades of white and beige. They can be male or female, and their clothes might be layered robes or modern yet simple styles. They should be vaguely reminiscent of modern angels or “Father Time.”

WWI Scenes:

This is a prosperous upper middle class bilingual family whose son is going off to university. In the Scene 1 they are dressed in stylish clothes of 1914: in Scene 4 Maman has a shawl, Bettina is in a well-worn (dirtied, and possibly bloodied) nurse’s “bluebird” uniform, and Mathilde is wearing overalls and carrying a rake.

Maman: (*motherly*) _____

Bettina: (*earnest*) _____

Mathilde: (*energetic*) _____

Papa: (*supportive*) _____

George: (*enthusiastic*) _____

Soldier 1: (*tired*) _____

Soldier 2: (*angry*) _____

Soldier 3: (*intelligent*) _____



WWII Scenes:

This is a comfortable working class family who has just experienced financial success after the hard times of the Depression. Clothing styles are late 1930's.

Mother: (anxious) _____

Father: (determined) _____

Hannah: (younger sister, teasing) _____

Jack: (brother, single minded) _____

Soldier 4: _____

Soldier 5: _____

Soldier 6: _____

Factory girls wear baggy jeans or overalls underneath matching black aprons or simple grey cotton tunics. Hair is tied up under colourful bandana's like "Rosie the Riveter" style. They may mime or carry a variety of items like a straw broom, pail, hammer, screwdriver or large funnel.

Factory Girl 1: (worried) _____

Factory Girl 2: (dreamy) _____

Factory Girl 3: (defiant) _____

Factory Girl 4: (worried) _____

Factory Girl 5: (enthusiastic) _____

Korean War Scenes:

This is a comfortable middle class family. Clothing styles are 1950's summer.

Mom: (determined) _____

Tina: (demonstrating a comfortable teasing relationship between siblings) _____

Joe: (young man, recent graduate) _____

Murray: (friend of Joe) _____

Soldier 7: _____

Soldier 8: _____



Scene 1: The Call to Enlist



SCENE 1: THE CALL TO ENLIST

The play is staged in three distinct locations: stage right, centre, and stage left. In this way, the three wars of Canadian participation that we honour on Remembrance Day are viewed like a timeline continuum: WWI, WWII, and the Korean War. Unless otherwise indicated, the action of each particular war always takes place in the same area of the stage

Newspaper boy enters apron of stage (closed curtains) as George and Papa enter the other side.

Newspaper Boy: *(shouting)* Today's Ottawa Citizen* for Sale! Get your Ottawa Citizen!
Headline: Would-Be Soldiers Line Up Around The Block on Elgin Street. First Canadian Battalion Rushes to Mother England's Side. (*Use name of your local prominent newspaper.)

Papa: We'll take one!

They look at it, look at each other, and rush off.

The scene unfolds as a market place crowd pours into the front of the "performance space" from any available door. Adult roles, like enlistment officers, market sellers, and shoppers enter from side. Child roles come in singing in a kind of parade from the back through the audience. Once the "marketplace" or town square feeling is established, the tableau freezes for the duration of each performance. In between there is movement and noise. The timing between each group is both natural yet tightly timed.

Singers: *(same tune as French folk-song, "Napoléon avait cinq cents soldats")*
Les Canadiens avaient cinq cents soldats,
Les Canadiens avaient cinq cents soldats,
Les Canadiens avaient cinq cents soldats,
Marchant d'un même pas !

Mama steps out from the curtains.

Maman: Mathilde! Bettina! Je vous cherche! Le temps est arrive!

Mathilde and Bettina: Bien sur Maman!

Singers: Aurevoir!

Singers join the choir. One of them who has been throwing a ball in the air "accidentally" puts it down in a central location to wave goodbye and forgets it. She joins another group while Mathilde and Bettina join their mother shopping for apples.

"Look for the good" Group:

A child finds the ball and starts bouncing it, humming "Les Canadiens." The ball owner sees this, runs over. The other group of children watch carefully.



Can I have my ball back?

Uh, oh...it's yours? Sure! (*hands it over—child runs to protective coverage as other group moves menacingly close.*)

Hey, why did you steal my sister's ball?

What are you talking about? (*confused*) I didn't steal it. I found it on the ground.

Sure, sure. You're such a liar.

I'm not a liar.

I saw you take it. You were going to keep it. You'd better watch out.

I didn't take it! I found it. Why do you guys always try to stir up trouble? You always look for the bad in people.

“Be welcoming” Group:

One child is standing alone while others are grouped together peering in her direction..

Look at her. She's that new girl in our class.

She's a stranger. And she doesn't look like us.

What do you mean? I think she looks like us.

No. Look, her hair is curly (*straight, long, short, whatever hair the actor has!*).

And besides, she doesn't sound like us.

Ohhhhhh, that's true.

Like I said, she's a stranger.

Ahhhhh (*understanding the implication now*)

Child notices them staring at her. She walks shyly over, and speaks in the accent and grammar of an immigrant group in your community

Hello. I know your face. You live on my street don't you?

Oh yes, that's right.

Can I play with you?

No-o-o, I don't think so. We have better things to do. (*They arrogantly walk away.*)

“Accept responsibility” Group:

Two adults passing

Sir, when you drove your new fangled automobile down our street last week you frightened my horse. Would you please drive at a reduced speed?

Well your horse will just have to get used to it. I can't be responsible for your horse's nerves. Or your nerves for that matter. Good day to your Sir.

“Be generous” Group:

Apple vendor is bothered by shabbily dressed children lingering close at hand.

What is it child? You've been hanging around all day, bothering my customers.



We, we,

Well, what is it. Speak up.

We're hungry. Could we have an apple?

So that's what you're after is it? Free food! No! There are jobs to be had if you'd just apply yourself. The mill is looking for workers, and you could always shine shoes or sell newspapers. Earn your own keep...If you think I'm going to give you some of my hard earned money you're crazy? Now, SKEDDADLE!

"Think for yourself" Group:

Officers: Join up now! Help our Allies beat the enemy! Be a man and stand beside Mother England when she needs you! Your country needs you!

Worker 1: I'm thinking of enlisting

Worker 2: Whatever for?

Worker 1: I want some adventure in my life. I want an opportunity to travel, to see a bit of the world.

Worker 2: Believe me, you won't be doing much travelling far from a battlefield.

Worker 3: I'm going to protect England. She's like our mother country. And the fighting is happening in France. It's like he's our father. You wouldn't leave your parents defenseless, would you?

Worker 2: Well no-o-o-o, but what about the actual fighting? Why would you kill fellas you don't even know, for a squabble that doesn't even concern us! It makes no sense to me.

Worker 2: You know Frank, you can say what you like, but if you don't enlist, people will think you're a coward. Plain and simple.

Worker 3: That's right Frank, a coward.

Worker 1: So Frank, are you coming to enlist with us?

Worker 2: Well...(thoughtfully) I guess you're right about that. I suppose I don't have much of a choice do I? All right, let's go.... (*They head towards the line up.*)

"Solve problems with words" Group:

Children standing in a circle playing a handclapping game are accidentally interrupted by an exuberant pair chasing each other. As the groups collide, everyone collapses in a splendid heap.

Hey! What are you doing?

Whaddya mean?



You hurt us.

Huh, Huh (*confusion*)...You're wrong! It's the other way around! YOU hurt US!

Well, we're not puttin' up with you fellas knockin' us over.

Both "sides": (*each word emphasized with pointed fingers*) THIS IS WAR!

(At the exact moment their mutual glare is about to erupt in a fight, a parading choir marches through and the crowd disperses as the choir sings.)

CHOIR: "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" by Jack Judge and Harry Williams

The three storytellers enter the performance space carrying a simple poster with the date and name of their war clearly printed on it. They attach it along the apron of the stage during the singing and wait until they are alone.

Storyteller 1: War. Yes, the root of war goes back to a time before even I can remember.

Storyteller 3: Sadly, the root of war starts growing whenever people think they are better than others.

Storyteller 2: It blooms whenever someone deliberately thinks the worst of others and stirs up trouble.

Storyteller 3: It happens when people cannot accept differences or be tolerant and welcoming.

Storyteller 1: Or can't solve problems with the appropriate words or say sorry.

Storyteller 3: Or do not accept responsibility for their actions.

Storyteller 2: This is the story of all wars in general, and three wars in particular. These are not the only wars Canadians have participated in, but they are the wars which have touched us most deeply in the last hundred years.

Storyteller 1: Canadians don't go to war easily. We are not greedy for other people's land or riches. Canadians believe that conflict can be solved by other means than war.

Storyteller 3: But if someone needs help, we'll consider it, and if it seems just, we'll pitch in and do our part.

Storyteller 1: Each of these wars took place at a different time. The Great War, as it was known at first, was fought from 1914 to 1918. It was also called, "The war to end all wars"....Honestly!...It was a World War and it was the biggest war that had ever been fought up to that point. It affected so many people in so many countries, and there was so much killing and terrible destruction, that everyone thought it was the war to end all wars, until.....



Storyteller 2: ...until the Second World War, that is! It was called World War Two, and it took place from 1939 to 1945.

Storyteller 1: When people realized that this was a second world war, and that it once again involved a huge number of people from all six continents, well that's when the name of the Great War was changed to the First World War...

Storyteller 3: ...and the third war in our trio of wars was not a world war, but still powerful for those who experienced it. It was the Korean War.

Storyteller 2: What were all those wars about? What is any argument in your family or with your friends about? A difference of opinion that grows bigger and bigger until it swallows everybody up with its own crazy reasons.

Storyteller 3: The story of war is the story of families: the families in your neighbourhood, the families on the "other side", and maybe, just maybe, your own family.

Curtains open to reveal three separate groups. WWI family is admiring a group of singers, WWII family is gathered around the kitchen table with children doing homework while Mother washes and shines a bowl of apples, and the Korean War group is listening to the radio in a picnic setting. Each group freezes in their tableau setting when not performing.

CHOIR grouping again: *"It's a Long Way to Tipperary"* (Second verse)

WWI Family:

Clapping as they turn away from the choir who then disperse offstage.

Maman: What a catchy tune! *(As she turns away, Mathilde tries to sneak an apple from behind her.)* Hey, *(teasingly)* you little monkey! Here *(throws her one)*. Next time be sure to ask, ok?

Bettina: They've been singing that song all over England for some time. Now it's catching on in Canada as our boys head off to war.

Maman: I know war between England and Germany has been declared, but Canada has been a country of our own for almost 40 years now. We're not a colony of England anymore. So, pourquoi? Why should we get involved in a war that is over the seas and doesn't concern us?

Mathilde: Maman, you are the only person I know who thinks that way! We have to stand beside Mother England and France. These are our closest allies and Canada must lend a hand.

Maman: *(checking her timepiece)* Where is that father and brother of yours?

Papa: Here we are!



Maman: Your final farewell moments with us before you leave for university, and you arrive late as usual!

Mathilde: Get a move on George or you'll miss your train. I can't wait to see a steam train up close!

George: Sorry Maman, I...I won't need to go the train station today.

Maman: Why George? Did you manage to get yourself a ride in one of those new motor coaches instead?

George: No Maman. It's just that...well, I've signed up.

Bettina: Signed up? Signed up for what? A different university?

George: No, I've signed up, I've enlisted in the army. I'm going to fight overseas.

Maman: No! You're barely old enough George! Papa, you can't agree to this!

Papa: (*sympathetically*) I'm sorry Dear, but he is old enough. Actually, I went down with him to enlist myself, but they turned me down. Said I was too old to fight. So I volunteered to take a desk job so I could help out any way I can.

Mathilde: George, what luck! Promise me you'll write to us about every single adventure!

Papa: (*persuasively*) Now, now dear. I'm sure it will only be for a few months. Darling, consider it part of his education. Everyone says the war will be over by Christmas. He'll have an adventure and before we know it he'll be back to school in the spring!

Maman: (*sigh*) Alright then. George, I'll give you my timepiece. Whenever you look at it, you'll think of your dear Maman and know that we'll be together again before this watch stops ticking.

Freeze. WWII Family Group is activated.

Mother is standing at a centre table shining apples as she moves them from the basket to the bowl. The two children are doing homework.

Mother: You KNOW what 7 times 9 are. We went over this yesterday.

Jack: (*mutter*s) 60,...no.....62.....no...63! 7 times 9 are sixty three!

Hannah: Let's see, Canada became the Dominion of Canada in...1867. If its 1939 now, we've been a country for how many years?

Jack: I can figure it out!



Hannah: Sure you can! Have a go at it mister math genius!

Mother: Children! That's enough! Father will be hungry and tired after a hard day's work and I don't want him to see you two arguing. *(door slams)*

Father: Hello all! *(hugs daughter who notices clean clothes)*

Hannah: Daddy, you're not dirty at all. Weren't you working today?

Father: I ...I spent the day in the line-up.

Mother: *(panicking)* Line-up? What line-up? I thought there was plenty of work for you this year. Why were you in a line-up?

Father: Not the employment line up dear, the enlistment line up.

Jack: Dad! You're going to fight overseas!

Mother: No! What will we do without you?

Father: We all have to do our part. We have to. We can't let those devils Hirohito and Hitler take over the world. I know the war seems far away right now, but it won't be if we don't do something about it.

FREEZE.... Korean War Family is activated. Joe and Tina grab an apple and throw it to the other. They do this back and forth a few times, laughing and teasing each other.

Mom: Hey! Give me back that apple! There won't be enough apples for everyone if you use them like footballs!

Joe: Actually, we were thinking more like baseballs.

Mom: As long as you don't use them for hockey pucks!

Tina: Hey, now that's a great idea... She shoots, she scores! *(Takes a big bite!)*

Mom: Sports and more sports. It's a wonder you were able to graduate from high school with all the sports you do. But you did. *(Mom unpacks picnic lunch while the kids throw an apple back and forth for each phrase spoken.)*

Joe: And with honours I might add!

Tina: What a fluke. The secretary's pen slipped!

Joe: Let's hope the same dame is working when you graduate!

Tina: Just you wait, Joe! My goal is to beat you by winning every scholarship you ever applied for!

Mom: Enough now! If only you two would compete when it comes to getting your chores done on time!

Murray: (*rushes in with a transistor radio*) Hi Mrs. Howell! You won't believe the news.

Joe: You won't believe our news! Mom bought tickets for the family to go on a trip to Montreal before I leave for university.

Murray: Wow, that's great, but this news is even bigger. The Prime Minister is on the radio making an announcement.

Tina: Here, I'll turn it on!

Radio Announcer: We interrupt this broadcast to bring you an important public service announcement from Prime Minister St. Laurent. He is in our CBC studio in Ottawa. Go ahead, Prime Minister

Prime Minister Louis S. Laurent: Fellow Canadians. Today, on August 7, 1950, the government has authorized the recruitment of an additional army brigade which is beginning on Wednesday. This brigade will be known as the Canadian Army Special Force. This brigade will be available for service in Korea as part of the United Nations forces. The United Nations action in Korea is not war. It is police action intended to prevent war by discouraging aggression.

The brigade will be known as the Canadian Army Special Force and it will be specially trained and equipped to be available for use in carrying out Canada's obligations under the United Nations charter. The infantry units will be organized as second battalions of the Royal Canadian Regiment, the Princess Patricia's, and the Royal 22nd Regiment. The association of the new brigade with these historic regiments will have numerous advantages.

The army wants young men, physically fit, mentally alert, single or married, and particularly just as many veterans of the Second World War as possible.

Murray: My oldest brother fought in Europe during World War Two. He always said it was tough, but worth it because he helped to free Europe from fascism. I'm going to fight in Korea. This is my chance. My chance to make a difference like my brother did.

Joe: A chance for adventure. A chance to help out. I think our plans have just changed Mom. I know we were going to go on a trip to Montreal this summer, but I think that Murray and I will make a little side trip to Korea first.

The curtain closes, and ominous music plays.



SCENE 2: THE REASONS WHY

The Storytellers are animated and physically illustrate their words with descriptive movement.

Storyteller 2: What starts a war?

Storyteller 1: Let's say our whole world is like your playground. When you and another person have a disagreement, and your friends take sides, and line up behind the two with the first problem, it just gets bigger and bigger, and then gets out of control.

Storyteller 3: What was first a disagreement between two people becomes a fight between two gangs, and before you know it, the whole playground is involved! The First World War was like that. Both sides thought they would win in a few months. Instead, it took four terrible years.

Storyteller 1: ...and the whole world was dragged into it.

Storyteller 2: The Korean War was something else. That was more like like your playground being divided in half down the middle with two different ways of playing on each side.

Storyteller 3: Only, after a while, the north side, who is playing with communist ideas and getting supplied with Soviet guns and Chinese soldiers, wants both sides to play together... THEIR way.

Storyteller 2: Meanwhile, the other half – the south side – who is playing with capitalist and democratic ideas is getting the help of Americans, isn't interested. But the North side won't take "No" for an answer, and decides to attack.

Storyteller 1: So the United Nations convinces you and other countries to join in and help South Korea keep their side of the playground.

Storyteller 3: And the Second World War?

Storyteller 1: Well, sometimes there really are bullies who have a high opinion of themselves. They think they're the best: they think, for no particular reason, that they're better than you, or you, or you! And they want to take over the playground to prove it!

Storyteller 2: This is called "fascism." Adolf Hitler, of Germany, was the biggest of the bullies in the European part of the world and Emperor Hirohito of Japan was the bully in the Asian part of the world.

Storyteller 3: First, others tried to make deals with those bullies: they let them get away with some bad things, hoping they wouldn't do other bad things.



Storyteller 1: In the end, they realized it wasn't going to work, that these bullies couldn't be trusted. It got to the point where the only way to stop them was to stand up to them. That's the way it is on the playground, and THAT's the way it was in the Second World War. Watch, and you'll see.

BULLY DANCE: *Dance and percussion piece "stomp style" about fascism. Both sides use a specific percussion instrument like; hockey sticks without the blades versus tin garbage can lids or large coffee tins.*

Dancers 1: *Wearing jeans and t-shirts of solid colours without labels or designs emerge in two lines from opposite sides of the stage. They build up a playful rhythm and end up facing each other. A leader does a "call and response" rhythm. The beat, movement and overall sounds are playful.*

Dancers 2: *Dressed entirely in dark shades emerge in a similar way from the two sides. Their beat is simple and menacing and steadily builds to overtake the sound of Dancers 1. Dancers 2 movements are stiff and soldier like and purposeful in a dark, deliberate manner. They encircle and overwhelm Dancers 1, forcing them to hand over their sticks. Dancers 1 shrink down and are hunched in the centre of the circle as Dancers 2 lord over them victoriously. Freeze as curtains close.*

SCENE 3: THE WAR FRONT

Storytellers step out of the curtain onto the apron of the centre stage.

Storyteller 1: Sometimes kids like to play at war. That's okay.

Storyteller 2: They like the bravery of being a hero.

Storyteller 3: They like the feeling of rightness when you're up against the bad guy.

Storyteller 1: They like to hide and spy, sneak up, and retreat.

Storyteller 2: They like the excitement of the game. And then, of course, they like to go home for their dinners at night.

Storyteller 1: If you were one of the men in our trio of wars,

Storyteller 2: If you were a member of their family,

Storyteller 3: You would know that in real life - it was not so easy.

Music is eerie. The curtain opens to reveal three tableaux: WWI soldiers sitting between sandbags; WWII soldiers resting against a backdrop of a destroyed building; the Korean War soldiers sitting on their knapsacks warming their hands over a propane stove or lantern. It's as if all three groups are taking a reflective break. At the end of the scene, they "jump to" and exit their positions.



WWI: *(sitting hunched between sandbags. The soldiers all participate in the conversation by talking directly to the audience.)*

George: Mud. That's what I'd say about this war. Mud. Ha! I used to love the feeling of it in the spring, between my toes. But now it's everywhere – in my food, between my fingers, in my hair and clogging up my boots.

Soldier 1: That's because this war got off to a strange start. We faced the enemy across the fields of France and Flanders, in Belgium. There weren't many trees, or the usual places to hide. So, we dug into the ground. Yeah, and then so did the enemy. And then we both dug deeper. They call this sopping mess "trenches," but we call it "home."

Soldier 2: When we fight, we go "over the top" and into a stinking mess of barbed wire, dead soldiers, and big craters from exploding shells sent long distances from artillery guns.

Soldier 1: Oh yes, and all that shelling makes for even more mud!

George: Another thing I'd say about this war is gas. Yes, gas. Not the kind that people laugh and joke about (*soldiers laugh*), or the kind you put into a motor coach to make it go, but the kind (*soldiers get very serious*) that floats across the fields on the wind like yellow death. The enemy surprised us the first time they used it, and the gas burned our lungs and many died, but we Canadians did not run.

Soldier 3: We did something ingenious and oddly surprising that day. I know a little about chemistry and I knew that uric acid neutralized gas, so-o-o-o-, we peed into our handkerchiefs and held them over our mouths and noses so we could breathe. You might laugh at the thought, but that's what saved many of us that day. Now they've issued us proper gas masks. Even then, when the gas alarms go off or you see the yellow mustard gas floating towards us, you have to act fast, or your lungs are finished.

George: So far our major battles have been the on the Somme, at Ypres, and our stunning victory at Vimy Ridge (*the other soldiers cheer*). And now its Passchendaele Ridge, the muddiest and most blasted place on the whole of the western front. It's almost time to go over the top again. Actually, what time is it? (*brings out watch and kisses it*) Hah! It's still ticking, and so am I.

Soldiers prepare to go over the top. Freeze. WWII soldiers come to life.

WWII: *Soldiers appear to be sharing a baguette on a break, leaning against a shattered brick wall, and eating small pieces that "Father" rips and passes out.*

Soldier 4: (*youngish and energetic*) We've got the Nazi's on the run! Finally! Finally this war is about covering ground and rooting out the enemy!

Soldier 5: (*older, and more seasoned*) Look at what we had to go through today to get here.



Soldier 4: UN-BE-LIEVABLE. I'll never forget that view from the ship's deck as we were going in! The sky a mass of bombers and fighters, the sea full of ships and boats of every description and the ships full of men, tanks, canons, supplies – and us!

Father: Funny, all I remember is the green faces of the sea sick guys around me. And then noise: the noise of thousands of bombers and fighters and naval guns blasting away. Simply indescribable. I thought I'd never live to hear my little girl sing again.

Soldier 6: (*realist*) Well we're on the ground now. This has gotta be the greatest invasion in the history of the world!

Soldier 4: (*expansively, blowing kisses to the wind*) Victory, here we come!

Soldier 5: Jacques, save the kissing for your girlfriend when you finally get home.

Father: I'll tell you something: this is my second time on the beaches of France. In 1942, I was with the Royal Regiment of Canada when we landed at Dieppe. What a disaster! Of us 5,000 Canadians who landed that day, 3,000 haven't been heard of – killed or captured. And I was one of the lucky ones. Today was my lucky day again. We took Juno Beach and I'm still alive – again.

Soldier 6: We're all lucky to have survived today.

Soldier 5: What made me join up was what happened to my cousin in Hong Kong. My cousin... like a brother to me.

Soldier 4: Yeah, right... (*remembering*) that was even before Dieppe.... go on....

Soldier 5: In Hong Kong, the Allies sent Canadian troops to help fortify the island against an expected Japanese attack. But they didn't send nearly enough. And when the Japanese invaded, they over-ran the island in no time. Don't know what happened to my buddies in the Winnipeg Grenadiers, but they and the people of Hong Kong are probably suffering terribly.

Soldier 4: I was jealous when the 1st Canadian Armoured Brigade and the Infantry Division shipped out to Sicily and Italy. Jealous of their chance to get on the ground and put two years of waiting behind them. I too wanted to take Italy back olive grove by olive grove, even if it meant I'd be crawling through the ruins.

Father: Well little buddy, you've got plenty of chances now. You won't be eating pasta in Italy, but hopefully you'll get to see tulips in Holland. Those Nazi's probably know they're going to lose, but you can be sure they still won't give up. We'll have to fight for every inch of territory through France, Belgium, and Holland.

Soldier 4: And we're going to bring those fascists down!

(*Everyone nods and murmurs their agreement.*)



Soldier 6: Shhh, what's that sound?

Soldiers stealthily pick up their guns and prepare for the unknown. Freeze. Korean War soldiers come to life. They start rubbing their hands over a Coleman stove can.

Korean War:

Joe: Cold! This war in Korea is cold! All I knew about Korea when I signed up was something about cherry blossom trees. And when I arrived, I find out there's no cherry blossoms because – it's winter! It's so cold I could have brought my hockey skates!

Murray: And what about them mountains! Who knew Korea had mountains – and plenty of them.

Soldier 9: When they told me I had to carry my Bren gun, which weighs almost as much as me, and my gear up and down those mountains, I thought they must be joking!

Soldier 7: When I signed up I was living in a small town that I used to call *Nowheresville*. Well, call me stupid, but *Nowheresville* looks pretty good to me right now!

Soldier 8: It's probably the same for the Chinese soldiers fighting with the North Koreans. They're sort of like you, buddy. One day they're village boys. And then something big happens in the world. Next thing they know, they're running up mountains in Korea with Canadians shooting at them.

Joe: At least we've done our very best for the South Koreans.

Murray: Our biggest victory was back in April, 1951, in the hills around Kap'yong.

Soldier 8: Did you know there were 8,000 enemy troops against us? That's eight of them for every one of us! But we held-out and won. The way Korean's tell it, the battle of Kap'yong stopped the communist forces from capturing their capital of Seoul.

Joe: Even my sister wrote to me to tell me that the newspapers called it "Canuck Heroism." My mother didn't want me to go to war in Korea, but after that she sure was proud.

Soldier 8: Well then Joe, since you seem so keen on making your mother proud of you, let's saddle up and get a move on. There'll be plenty more opportunities for you to make her proud before we're done here.

Eerie music. Curtains start to close as all three groups of soldiers leave the performance space and head out "on patrol" by staying low, slipping off the stage and dispersing through the audience and out the available doors.





Scene 4: The War Front in Korea

SCENE 4: THE HOME FRONT

CHOIR: *enters stage in front of closed curtain, and sings, “Till the Boy’s Come Home (Keep the Home Fires Burning)” by Lena Guilbert Ford and Ivor Novello*

Storyteller 2: *(who has been singing with the choir) What do you do when your son is far away in a dangerous place?*

Storyteller 1: *Or you miss your brother’s teasing?*

Storyteller 2: *Or you can’t get your Dad to help you with homework...for five years?*

Storyteller 1: *Sometimes you cry. A lot of times you’re sad. But do you stop?*

Storyteller 2: *Do you give up?*

Together: *NEVER! You join the home front!*

Curtains open

WWI: *Maman is knitting. She has a big basket of socks beside her rocking chair. Bettina is now a nurse in France and is wrapping bandages. Mathilde, dressed in overalls as a “farmerette,” is hoeing in a garden.*

WWII: *Mother and the Factory Girls are dressed like “Rosie the Riveter” and wearing Munitions factory smocks. They stand in rows ready to set the factory line in motion. The children are sitting in front of them slightly off to the side, wrapping more layers on two large balls of tinfoil.*

Korean War: *Mom is wearing glasses and is sitting at a small desk, writing. She has a stack of newspapers beside her.*



WWI:

Maman: I am in a constant state of worry about George. The only thing that keeps my nerves in check is when I am knitting for the boys in the trenches. They say their feet are in a terrible state after being wet for days on end. They say they get a condition, called trench foot, and some of their toes actually turn black and rot off! Imagine that! So, besides cooking, cleaning, and my household chores, I spend every spare minute knitting. That or writing to George or Bettina.

Bettina: You won't find me at home with Maman anymore. George and most of our school chums are off fighting the war, and so I thought – why not me too? Why shouldn't I do my bit? That's when I decided to become a nurse. Here at the hospital we do whatever is necessary, even assist the doctors during surgery. But it is us who care for the boys afterwards. And so many times, you hear them call out for the ones they love. Especially their mothers. Just like when you go to bed, and you want your mother at your side, you hear these poor chaps at night calling out for the mothers, so far away.

Mathilde: I was too young to become a nurse or to work in a munitions factory worker, but I did the next best thing: I joined up to help bring in the harvest! With so many of our men away at the front there are only a few left to work the farms and gather the harvest. I get to wear trousers and bring in the wheat. Yup, farmerettes! That's what they call us! Look (*showing off her muscles*), wouldn't my brother George be surprised to see my new found muscles? I only pray he gets the chance.

Freeze.



Scene 4: The Home Front, WWI



WWII:

Hannah: Look, *(holding her tinfoil ball to the light)* I'm sure my ball is bigger than yours!

Jack: No way, I have about a million gum wrappers in this thing.

Hannah: But I got all the cigarette wrappers from Mom's work. Here, feel it, it's heavier than yours by far!

Jack: It doesn't really matter. What matters is that we are doing our very best to collect tin and other materials for the war effort.

Hannah: You're right Jack, every little bit counts. *(pulling bits of tin from her pocket)* Here, let's do this together. Here's *(pulling out a pocket full of tin bits)* a bunch more. I got them from the movie theatre.

Jack: At this rate we're going to have the biggest scrap metal ball in the history of our neighbourhood. And then we're going to hand it over to the factory, so's they can use it to make more tanks or whatever. Anything to help bring Dad home sooner.

Mother – in two lines with the Factory Girls – starts up the factory motions. Group does about 10 one-two movements with their arms. The factory line pauses "Break Time!" so each worker has a chance to step forward and speak.

Mother: *(longingly)* Working in this munitions factory on the afternoon shift, I really miss the kids. I get them up at six in the morning even though they don't have to leave for school until 8:30, just so that I can have the pleasure of their company. I check their homework and make them a good breakfast. I save the latest letters from my husband to read to them then...and we often write back right away. I miss the kids: but I really miss Eric too, and I can't help but feel my work here will bring him home faster.

Factory Girl 1: *(passionately)* Impatient? I'm the most impatient girl you ever met. And I can work fast enough for three! That's because I'm mad about the war, and all the fellas fighting overseas. In fact, tomorrow I'm joining the army myself. The Canadian Women's Army Corps! And when I get over there, I'll give the enemy a piece of my mind. *(Pulls out mirror from pocket, and spends time fixing hair and putting on makeup.)*

Factory Girl 2: *(dreamily)* They always said I was too dreamy to work in a factory. But what they don't know is that it's perfect for me: when your hands know what they have to do, your mind can drift away! Sometimes, I find myself thinking about how my mother, Nelda Delorme, survived her own stint in a munitions factory. It was in English speaking Massachusetts of all places! Then, she almost died after the Great War when she caught the Spanish influenza from my uncle, a returning soldier. I heard that more people died world-wide from the Spanish Flu than all the millions killed in the war! Mon Dieu! If she had died I wouldn't be here today doing the same thing – working in a munitions factory waiting for my husband to return, dreaming of our future babies...I'll name them all with D for my mother Delorme..Danielle, Denis...(sigh) In the meantime, here I am, drifting between the past and the future, while my hands are busy making munitions in the present. Crazy! *(holds them up as if to prove it and shakes head wonderingly)*



Factory Girl 3: (*defiantly*) As soon as the lads were called up for the fight, the government started making plans to put us girls to work in the factories. Like so many single girls I needed to work in order to help put food on my family's table. But do you think I could get a half-decent job? No! They said that the good jobs go to the men first because they had to feed their families. Like I don't need to? But now that I'm working in a good job with good wages, I don't plan on giving it up anytime soon. And just let them try and take it away from me! They'll see.

Factory Girl 4: (*worried*) We used to always receive letters from my cousin Anne Frank from Amsterdam at the beginning of each month. They would come with their special stamps and mother would keep them for me to open. I would laugh my head off at all the tricks she would play on her sister Margot. But since the war started, her letters began to sound much more serious and I could tell there was something wrong. And then she stopped writing. I'm worried about her. Do you think something bad has happened? If I could, I would send her a ticket and money to come to Canada, if I only knew where she was.

Factory Girl 5: (*enthusiastically*) I love this job. And I love the girls I work with. It's funny that we call each other girls even though some of us are mothers and grandmothers. It's a hard job, but I love the feeling of camaraderie and friendship that exists between us, even though we come from many different walks of life. I also love having my own pay cheque with my name, "Rita", printed right on it. But I hate this war.

Factory Girl 2: (*calls out*) Break Time's over! Come on Ladies let's get back to work!

(Group starts the actions again for about 10 one-two swings before freezing to indicate the end of the scene.)



Scene 4: The Home Front, WWII



"Some of the men didn't come back"



Korean War:

Mom is writing at desk.

Mom: I'm writing letters to the newspapers. To complain and to remind them that they have a duty to ensure that the Korean War doesn't fade from the public's eye. The war is still raging over there, but if you ask me you wouldn't know it from reading the newspapers – unless of course you go to the back pages, where they seem to want to keep it out of sight. You see, my boy is in Korea. The government asked him to join up in the fight to keep communism from spreading into South Korea and the rest of the world, and he did. He left his family and his country to go and fight for Canada, and yet all we hear about is other places and other events. It's not right. It may not be much what I am doing, but the way I look at it, the more they shine a light on what is happening over there, the quicker it will be over. *(Drops head down to write more)*

Tina: *(rushing in with a newspaper)* Mom! It's over! The war in Korea is over! Take a look at this headline, fresh off the press! Headline: Korean Armistice Declared. Date: July 27, 1953. Location: Panmunjom, Korea. After two years, two weeks, and three days since the two sides began peace negotiations, the UN and Communist delegations have signed an armistice to end the fighting. It says that once the cease fire took effect both sides just shot off their left-over ammunition like crazy. Soldiers said it looked like the fireworks at the Canadian National Exhibition. They said a sea of Chinese soldiers stood across the valley, waving flags and shouting.... Well, I guess they must be just as glad as our boys to go home.

All three tableaux now unfreeze and continue their motions in a calm, steady manner. When the "soldiers" return to each of the tableaux, they slow down and freeze again. Movement is all in slow motion.

Storytellers: **When peace came, when treaties were signed, when hostilities ceased, some of the men came back.** *(Korean war soldier comes from the side and knocks at the door. Mother reaches to hold his hands.)*

Some men came back wounded. *(Father with crutches and arm wrapped in bandages enters across the centre back of the stage. Children see him first. "Daddy!" they call. Mother reaches to greet him.)*

And some men didn't come back at all. *(Deliveryman soldier walks in front of the stage. When he arrives, he knocks at the door. Mathilde answers. He takes his hat off his head and rests a moment with it on his heart. They look at each other. Then he pulls an envelope out of his bag and hands it to her. She passes it to Maman who motions for Mathilde to open it. She does. Mathilde slowly draws out the pocket-watch and holds it up high.)*

Mathilde: It's broken. *(Maman and Bettina put their head down in a tableau of grief.)*

Storytellers: **BUT PEACE HAD COME. It was a gift they gave us – and it was earned with their youth, their talents, their time, and sometimes even their lives.**



Curtains close.

CHOIR: “*Une Colombe*” by Celine Dion

SCENE 5: CEREMONY OF REMEMBRANCE

*Curtains open onto the stage set with a Commonwealth War Graves Commission style headstone. The actors stand evenly spaced, two on one side and two on the other across the front of the stage. **See Teacher’s Guide: Ceremony of Remembrance for additional details and procedures.***

Storyteller 1: It is said that time doesn’t stand still for anyone. But don’t you believe it. Time always stops for us on November 11, when we reflect on the gift of peace.

Storyteller 2: What does the gift of peace feel like to you? Is it gentle... soft, like when you drift off to sleep? Peace can be a quiet place of comfort within you.

Storyteller 3: But peace is more active than that.

Actor: Peace looks for the good in others.

Storyteller 1: It welcomes the stranger and those different from you.

Storyteller 2: It shouts joyfully, “Don’t stand by yourself, JOIN US!”

Storyteller 3: Peace asks, “Would you like to play?” It notices, “Hey, you’re different, I like that!”

Actor: Peace can also be serious. Sometimes it says, “I’m sorry, I’ll try again”, or “I don’t understand, but explain it to me. I’m listening.”

Storyteller 1: Peace is knowing how to live with what you need, and not be greedy for what you want. Peace respects and uses the shared resources of our world wisely.

Storyteller 2: Peace is full of grace. Especially when it sounds like “Thank you.”

Storyteller 3: And so we say thank you to the men and women across the many generations whose sacrifices in times of war and peacekeeping helped to make us who we are today.

Storyteller 3: We say thank you to those who responded to the call of their leaders and fought valiantly and selflessly.

Storyteller 2: We say thank you to those cut down in the promise of their youth and the richness of their middle years.

Storyteller 3: We say thank you to those who paid the terrible cost of war. Let us use that knowledge to guide us towards peace.



Storyteller 1: We say thank you to all those Canadians who went before, whose contribution to the cause of freedom through two World Wars, the Korean War, and several United Nations Peacekeeping and UN sanctioned NATO missions forged a direction for our country and the world today.

Together: Together we remember. And we thank you.

The Honour March takes place to music which is solemn but moving, like “Hymn to the Fallen” from the movie “Saving Private Ryan.”

Once the wreath is laid that same person asks the audience to:

“PLEASE STAND”

- **BUGLE CALL: The Last Post**
- **MOMENT OF SILENCE**
- **The moment of Silence is ended when the wreath-layer says, “Please join us in the singing of ‘O Canada’.”**
- **All sing “O Canada.”**

Curtains close. The performance and Ceremony of Remembrance is ended.



**WWI Scenes at the Sunset Ceremony, Vigil 1914-1918 Project,
National War Memorial, November 10, 2008**

