Create a Play with Toy Theatre
with Beth Peterson

A QUICK GUIDE
Here’s a way to construct a toy theatre and create a short play to perform.

Beth performs a Toy Theatre presentation called, “Tales of our Times.” Then, she introduces five big ideas: history of Toy Theatre; make a puppet stage; sketch a story; create puppets; share your show. Toy Theatre emerged around the time of the first printing press. Artists would go to the theater and create drawings of the theaters, scenery, characters, and costumes that would be printed for kits with full script and directions for how to assemble the stage. For a small price, people could perform grand productions in their own home.

1 Make a proscenium stage, following the video, or follow these steps:
   Find a small box; cut out the top and front; use pieces to frame the proscenium.
   Decorate frame and draw scenery.

2 Sketch a Story, following the video, or follow these steps:
   Fold paper into six spaces or squares; Label right three squares: beginning/middle/end.
   Answer the following questions:
   Beginning: Who is your character?
   Middle: What surprises your character?
   End: How does it end?
   In the empty squares, sketch your character; sketch characters for the surprise; sketch the ending.

3 Sketch your characters; make your puppets; color and cut; then, tape a stick to the back of each.

4 Perform your puppet show; share with family and friends.

MATERIALS
Small carton; paper; pencil/pen; scissors; tape; glue/gel sticks; markers/colored pencils; sticks.

THINK ABOUT IT
Find a friend; together, create a two-character puppet play.

DIG DEEPER
To learn more about Puppet Theatre, check out: www.musiccenter.org/education/Teacher-Resources/Artsource-Curriculum/Available-ArtSource-Units/In-the-Heart-of-the-Beast-Puppet--Mask-Theatre/

TRY THIS CHALLENGE
Add music or write a script; memorize the lines that your characters use.

NEW WORD
Proscenium Stage
A framed stage where the audience faces the action.