BLACK NATIVITY
by Langston Hughes
Dec. 5-8, 2013

Study Guide

Pre-Show
1. What does the word ‘nativity’ mean?
   A: The word nativity means birth, especially the place, conditions, or circumstances of being born. When the word is capitalized “Nativity” it indicates the birth of Jesus or Christmas.

2. The play that you are going to attend is Black Nativity. What do you think that title means?
   A: The play is about the birth of Jesus, celebrated in the tradition of Black or African-American culture.

3. Who wrote Black Nativity?
   A: The famous African-American poet, novelist and playwright Langston Hughes.

4. What is the historical significance about the play?
   A: The play was first performed on Broadway on December 11, 1961, and was one of the first plays written by an African-American to do so.

5. What are some other poems, plays written by Langston Hughes?
   A: Simply Heaven, Tambourines to glory.

6. What are some other prominent Christmas plays?
   A: A Christmas Carol, Nutcracker, Handel’s Messiah.

Post Show
1. Which characters made the strongest impression and why?
2. What are the obvious themes represented in the play?
3. Music is a large part of what makes this Christmas production a success. How did it help to create mood, and tell the story?

Synopsis
Black Nativity is an uplifting, soul-stirring, roof-raising musical celebration of the Christmas story. Written by legendary poet, playwright, and social activist Langston Hughes, Black Nativity tells the story of Christmas through gospel song, poetry and dance. It is an uplifting experience the entire family will enjoy.

Like large family gatherings, this "count-your-blessings" evening plays out with contagious spontaneity and joyous imperfections. For a short time, everyone suspends holiday stress to become part of a warm-hearted tradition, recalling a time when holidays meant neighbors and community.