

# Study Guide for Teachers

## GIVE & TAKE JUGGLERS

### *Dynamic Duo*

presented by  
**Young Audiences**  
(866) 500-9265  
[www.yanjep.org](http://www.yanjep.org)



### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The circus is coming to your school! The Give & Take Jugglers, Eric and Allison, in a colorful and humorous performance, harken back to the days of vaudeville and traditional American circus, performing feats of juggling, tightwire, balancing, and spinning. While weaving in Character Development themes, the program engages students through silly antics and empowering audience participation.

### LEARNING GOALS

Students will learn about various character building themes, including the importance of: sharing, teamwork, practice, persistence, resilience, and respect for oneself and others.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

The modern circus was created in England by Philip Astley (1742-1814). A skilled horse trainer, Astley chose to imitate the trick-riders who performed, with increasing success, all over Europe. In 1768, Astley settled in London and opened a riding-school, where he taught in the morning and performed his "feats of horsemanship" in the afternoon. Astley's building featured a circular arena that he called the *circle*, or *circus*, and which would later be known as the ring. The size of the ring was eventually settled at a diameter of forty-two feet, which has since become the international standard for all circus rings. By 1770, Astley felt the need to bring other aspects to his show. He hired acrobats, rope-dancers, and jugglers, interspersing their acts between his equestrian displays. Another addition to the show was a character borrowed from the Elizabethan theater, the clown, who filled the pauses between acts with burlesques of juggling, tumbling, rope-dancing, and even trick-riding. With that, the modern circus—a combination of equestrian displays and feats of strength and agility—was born.

## **BEFORE THE PROGRAM**

"If you're not dropping, you're not learning" – Lottie Brunn (world famous juggler).

Learn to juggle scarves or balls with your students! Video links below, or are easy to find on youtube.

### **Writing / Discussion Prompts:**

Write about or discuss a time you saw a circus or what you imagine a circus to be. What do you remember?

Was there a time when you practiced something that was really challenging.? How did it feel? Did you end up succeeding?

Think of a time when you failed or messed up. Maybe you tried to score a goal, but missed, or woke up late and missed the bus, or were carrying something delicate and dropped it and it broke. How did that make you feel? What did you learn from it? How can you see that failure as a positive thing?

In what ways do you think circus takes teamwork? How does it take perseverance?

## **AFTER THE PROGRAM**

### **Grades k-5**

When in the show did you see: teamwork, perseverance, sharing?

How much practice do you think it took to learn all of those tricks? When was a time you needed to practice something hard?

Ask students, "Why do you think their group name is called "The Give & Take Jugglers" and does that have anything to do with teamwork?"

Learn to Juggle! Use scarves or bean bags. Watch the youtube links below with your class, or for guidance on how to teach your students. We have age appropriate challenges and group challenges!

### **Grades 6-12**

Research the history of American Circus. Interesting topics could include: The circus fire, PT Barnum, vaudeville, the use of horses in circus, the history of juggling throughout the world, research/debate the use of animals in the circus

## **VOCABULARY WORDS**

### **Grades k-5**

perseverance	juggle
teamwork	success
practice	failure
resilience	applause
circus	

### **Grades 6-12**

vaudeville	equilibratics
manipulate	pun

## **ARTIST INFORMATION**

The Give and Take Jugglers have enjoyed a wildly successful 40-year career. Founded in 1982, the original Give and Take Jugglers got their start busking on the streets of Philadelphia. Since then, they have performed in thousands of schools all along the east coast, in addition to community festivals, fundraisers, and events of all shapes and sizes. Today, Give & Take performers consist of married couple Eric Belcher and Allison Watman. Eric, a former Ringling Bros clown, has 30 years of performance experience, having joined Give & Take when he was 14 years old. Allison, an esteemed juggler and aerialist who joined Give & Take in 2011, holds her MA in Elementary Education and has a passion for education through the arts.

## **RESOURCES**

Learn to juggle with 2 Scarves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ve2FKNctOBg>

Learn to Juggle 3 Scarves:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWiZ4fNqu5c&t=25s>

PBS Circus Documentaries of all Kinds, from past to present:

[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/circus/?utm\\_source=promourl&utm\\_medium=direct&utm\\_campaign=circus\\_2018](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/circus/?utm_source=promourl&utm_medium=direct&utm_campaign=circus_2018)

Circus History:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/americas-big-circus-spectacular-has-long-and-cherished-history-180962621/>

[http://www.circopedia.org/SHORT\\_HISTORY\\_OF\\_THE\\_CIRCUS](http://www.circopedia.org/SHORT_HISTORY_OF_THE_CIRCUS)