

SHINING TIME STATION Fact Sheet



PBS Series

65 half-hour episodes; 1995-1996

SHINING TIME STATION®, set in the mythical Indian Valley, brought together characters and stories, magic and whimsy, in a dependable work-a-day small town setting filled with real-life situations and emotions that were familiar, sustaining and fun. According to developmental psychologist and Shining Time Station consultant, Dr. Ronald Slaby, *“The main task of young children is to understand their social world, and one of the ways they do this best is through stories.”*

This award-winning series, created by Britt Allcroft and Rick Siggelkow, was broadcast on PBS stations as part of their daily (Monday-Friday) children’s programming block. SHINING TIME STATION joined with other public television children’s series in addressing skill development to enhance a child’s sense of autonomy and ability to problem-solve as well as inspire their individual creativity and nurture their social skills, ultimately helping to shape a positive disposition toward learning – a vital key to a child’s success in school.

SHINING TIME STATION was a co-production of Britt Allcroft Inc, WNET and Catalyst Entertainment, Inc. Funding for the national outreach campaign was made possible by VTI.

National Outreach Campaign

The focus of the national outreach campaign, which was designed and managed by Outreach Extensions, was to develop and distribute curriculum materials to support children’s viewing of the SHINING TIME STATION™ series. The planned purpose of the materials was to help preschoolers, kindergarten and first grade students apply the concepts and values of the programs through participation in specially designed activities. We also wanted to extend the school experience into the home, so that parents could be involved in the education of their children. The result, the *All Aboard: Shining Time Station Activities Guide*, was co-created and co-produced by Britt Allcroft, Rick Siggelkow and Outreach Extensions.

All Aboard: Shining Time Station Activities Guide

In creating materials to accompany the award winning SHINING TIME STATION children’s series, Outreach Extensions sought to incorporate the same innovative, engaging and educational elements that entertained children watching the show. We also wanted to make sure that it was something that had never been done before and something that PBS stations needed, wanted and were able to use.

As a result, the *All Aboard: Shining Time Station Activities Guide*, was created to aid teachers and child care providers in reinforcing the life lessons found in all 65 episodes of SHINING TIME STATION. Its overall goal was to help children adopt the concepts and values of the program through participation in specially designed activities that were both educational and fun. The guide used episode themes to help children communicate and share their own personal stories. Scenarios asked children to revisit the events in the video, and recall the actions of the series’ characters. They then considered how they would play it, evaluating alternative choices and decisions, without definitive right or wrong answers.

The interdisciplinary approach offered creative, developmentally appropriate activities that helped kindergarten and first grade students learn more about themselves and others. Activities helped students to build self-esteem; encouraged them to recognize, express and accept their own feelings and emotions; and taught them to respect and appreciate others.

The curriculum complemented regular classrooms. All of the lessons followed a familiar format: synopsis of the television episode, materials, preparation, curricular areas, objectives, introduction to the video, discussion questions, at least three activities, recommended books to read aloud, and home activities. The tasks incorporated many disciplines, including language arts, art, music, movement, environmental studies and math. Each lesson provided opportunities for language development, a major focus in the primary grades; and for self-expression, a major factor in building self-esteem. Both the classroom projects and the take-home assignments were relevant to diverse gender, cultural, economic and life style families.

The lessons were designed to be easy to use. At least one activity in each lesson required no teacher preparation. When preparation was required, the lists of recommended materials included items readily available in a primary classroom. Characters for flannel board stories, stick puppets and finger puppets could be made by an older child using the patterns supplied at the end of the guide. The lessons could be taught in any order to coincide with current classroom themes or topics.

The project was sensitive to the important role parents and primary caregivers have in the education of their children, and the language barriers that may prohibit this participation. To bridge the gap between home and school, each lesson offered home activities that encouraged family members to reinforce the concepts and values taught in the classroom. The take-home sheets (printed in English and Spanish) first told the parent what the child learned in school that day, and suggested that the adult ask the child to share what he/she did. Additional activities suggested things to do at home, games to play, or outings to take.

This *All Aboard: Shining Time Station Activities Guide* was developed through a national collaboration. We asked outreach staffs at public television stations about the educational needs in their communities, and what grade levels would be appropriate target audiences. We held focus groups with teachers, curriculum specialists and administrators to find out what would be helpful in their schools. Our curriculum development team was comprised of primary grade professionals, including teachers, curriculum specialists and educational administrators. Once developed, we tried out some of the activities in diverse classroom settings. Our eager "test group" of students was delighted with the role playing exercises, flannel board stories, art projects and musical activities we'd created. We also talked to both English and Spanish speaking parents who participated with their children in the home activities. Everyone offered creative recommendations – and the guide benefited from their diverse perspectives.

Distribution: Outreach Extensions distributed the *All Aboard: Shining Time Station Activities Guide* (8.5" x 11", spiral-bound) directly to teachers and child care providers as well as to public television stations; the latter distributed them to educators within their communities.



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