At CTC, our mission is to Educate, Challenge, and Inspire our multigenerational audience. This Audience Resource Guide is just one of the ways through which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement, beyond just seeing the shows on our stage. Use these articles, conversation starters, and activities both before and after you watch Corduroy!
Playwright Barry Kornhauser has long been a part of the CTC family. He spoke to CTC for an OffBook article in March of 2017. Excerpts below—read the full interview here:

https://offbook.childrenstheatre.org/barry-kornhauser-corduroy-244b57db0bcb

What was the biggest challenge or most interesting aspect of adapting Corduroy to the stage?

*Corduroy* is a 28-page picture book, so the first challenge was to see if we could grow the story to fill a full hour on the stage, and to do so while honoring the voice and the intent of its author. ...It seemed to make some sense to have our little bear wander through a bit more of that big store in search of his missing button. Creating his misadventures throughout the rest of the night became the first order of business.

What's your favorite thing about the story of Corduroy?

...perhaps my very favorite thing about this story is that for Lisa, the toy she falls in love with is a plush bear that happens to be a bit broken. At the end of the book she sews a new button on Corduroy's shoulder strap so he'll feel more comfortable, but first she assures him: “*I like you the way you are.*” That's a lovely lesson about true friendship.

INSPIRE: From the Cast

We asked the cast of *Corduroy* what some of their favorite memories, stories or audience reactions were from THEIR side of the curtain. Copy and paste the link below for a glimpse into their perspective!

https://offbook.childrenstheatre.org/corduroy-from-the-actor-s-perspective-7fcb6ac2239d
EDUCATE: About Don Freeman

Don Freeman was born in San Diego, California, in 1908. After graduating high school and attending a summer course at San Diego School of Fine Arts, Don moved to New York, where he studied at the Art Students' League and developed a passion for theater. Don spent much of his time on Broadway and could often be found backstage, sketching actors and capturing everything that happened both on and off the stage in his sketchbook. He supported himself by playing his trumpet in a dance band, but after losing his trumpet on the subway Don decided to turn his attention to his sketches.

Don made a name for himself from his successful Broadway sketches and took his first step into children's literature when he was asked to illustrate for William Saroya. He quickly began writing and illustrating his own children's books, including Corduroy, A Pocket for Corduroy, and the Caldecott Honor Book Fly High, Fly Low. He collaborated frequently with his wife, Lydia, a fellow author and artist. Don died in 1978, and his wife went on to establish The Lydia Freeman Charitable Foundation.

History of Corduroy

Author and illustrator Don Freeman wanted to write a picture book about a character who explores a department store at night. His goal was to create a story that juxtaposed the luxury of department stores with the relatively modest lives of their patrons. How did he settle on a stuffed bear as the hero of such a tale? “I don’t remember how or when a toy bear came into my life,” wrote Don to editor Linda Zuckerman, "but he must have come from way out of my past. You know, I could just see a bear wearing corduroy overalls with one button missing … the minute I settled on Corduroy and Lisa, everything came together." He chose the name “Corduroy” for his cuddly main character because it was once his nickname for his son, Roy.

Though Corduroy is inarguably a classic picture book now, it almost never found its way into print. Initially, Corduroy wasn’t chosen to be published by Viking Press because they only published a small number of books each year. Don Freeman continued to remind the editors at Viking Press about this plucky little bear until, eventually, they decided to publish him. Don wrote the first draft in 1967, and the first copies graced bookstore shelves in 1968. Don’s sequel, A Pocket For Corduroy, was published in 1978, but sadly Don passed away before he could see it in print.
**INSPIRE: Spark conversation with the prompts and activities below before and after you watch the show!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How was watching a play on TV different than watching a movie or a television show?</th>
<th>Hide a button in your home and challenge your family to find it!</th>
<th>What does it mean to be friends? How do you know someone is your friend?</th>
<th>Write a letter or draw a picture for the actors!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read all of the books in the Corduroy series!</td>
<td>Lisa knows Corduroy will still be a great friend, even though he’s missing a button. What qualities do you look for in a friend?</td>
<td>Compare and contrast the book and play!</td>
<td>Have you ever lost something like Corduroy lost his button? How did you feel when you lost it? And when you found it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write or draw a picture of what happens next in the story. What other adventures do Corduroy and Lisa go on together?</td>
<td>If you were an actor, what role would you want to play?</td>
<td>Lisa does extra chores so she can save enough money to buy Corduroy. Have you ever saved money? What were you saving the money for?</td>
<td>What do you think is the lesson of this show?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design a pocket for Corduroy with paint, markers, or other craft supplies.</td>
<td>Lisa has responsibilities like chores and homework. What are some of your responsibilities?</td>
<td>How many times does the Night Watchman almost find Corduroy?</td>
<td>The Night Watchman is passionate about his job. What is something you are passionate about doing well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have corduroy fabric in your home? Why do you think Corduroy was named after this type of fabric?</td>
<td>How many times does Corduroy say “BUTTON!” during the show?</td>
<td>Rewrite the story from the perspective of The Night Watchman. How does the story change?</td>
<td>Learn to sew buttons back onto clothing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This activity allows you to develop an understanding for how the tone of your voice can say more than words, sometimes! In the play, Corduroy says “Button,” over and over again, but because he changes how he says it, we can still understand what he’s thinking and feeling. In theatre, this is called subtext.

Directions: Start by having family members say, “Button,” clearly in their regular voices. Brainstorm different ways you manipulate your voice. This is a great moment to introduce (or solidify) the musical elements of tempo (speed of sound), pitch (high or low tone), and volume (loud or soft) and apply them to your voice.

Take a moment after exploring each voice to discuss what these different voices sound like. What emotion might they associate with the different tempos and pitches?

Next, move on to exploring different emotions. You can use the following prompts and/or make up your own.

“Say “Button, button, button,” like…

- You are greeting Lisa for the first time.
- You realize you are missing your button.
- You hear a scary noise.
- You have to find a hiding spot from the Night Watchman.
- You realize you are lost.
- You find your button.
- You are falling asleep.

CHALLENGE: Night Watchman

This activity will challenge you to use physical and vocal control to move unnoticed!

Directions: To begin, one person assumes the role of the Night Watchman. Everyone else uses their body to become a frozen part of the department store.

When everyone is ready, the Night Watchman announces that the store is closed for the night. Everyone will try to move or switch positions without being caught by the Night Watchman. Anytime the Night Watchman catches someone moving, they are out. The game continues until only one person remains.

Or, you can make the alteration that anyone caught moving is sent to ‘deep storage’ where they need to remain for 60-seconds before re-joining the game!

This activity will have the most success if you can play in an open space.

If feasible, dim or turn off your lights. You can also have the Night Watchman use a flashlight if you have one available.
CHALLENGE: Story Sequence

So much happens in the plays we see and the books we read! See if you can remember the order of events in *Corduroy* by numbering the pictures below from 1\textsuperscript{st} – 6\textsuperscript{th}.
INSPIRE: Corkboard Conversations

Use the sticky notes below to review the show. Take a photo of this page and send it to tickets@childrenstheatre.org to share with the cast and crew!

Three adjectives that describe this play are...

1.
2.
3.

This play made me feel...

This play made me think about...

A question I still have is...

This play taught me...

A status I would post on my social media after seeing the show is...

My Rating of Corduroy at Children’s Theatre Company
More about Don Freeman
Why did Don Freeman Write Corduroy?
https://donfreeman.info/why-did-don-write-corduroy

Biography
https://donfreeman.info/bio

More about Corduroy
Adapting Corduroy for the Stage
https://offbook.childrenstheatre.org/barry-kornhauser-corduroy-244b57db0bcb

Viola Davis on ‘Corduroy Takes a Bow’

Check out these other Corduroy Adventures