This guide is to assist you in making the most of your experience of attending Stages Theatre Company's world-premiere, dance-inspired production of The Dot. Below is a summary of the show and activities to do before and after seeing it.
THE STORY

PLAY SYNOPSIS

Vashti knows one thing. She “just can’t draw.” But when her teacher tells her to “just make a mark and see where it takes you,” Vashti is set on a journey of discovery and imagination that proves that not only can she draw, everyone can. It’s just a matter of starting.

A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ADAPTATION

*The Dot* was adapted for the stage by playwright Jennifer Kirkeby (Stages’ adaptations of *The Snow Queen, The Velveteen Rabbit, Owl Moon, The Nightingale,* and *Twelve Dancing Princesses*) and composer James Lekatz (Stages’ adaptations of *Velveteen Rabbit,* and *The Snow Queen.* ) The adaptation is based on the book, *The Dot* written and illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds. Stages Theatre Company commissioned the adaptation in the winter of 2019 and it is a collaboration between Stages Theatre Company and Escalate Dance. It incorporates music, dance and dialogue to create a story about embracing your inner artist and trusting that your imagination will take you wherever you want to go. We are excited to bring this delightful and charming world premiere, dance-inspired adaptation to our stage this January.
BEFORE THE PLAY

READ THE BOOK
Before attending the stage adaptation at Stages Theatre Company, read the picture book the play is based on, *The Dot* by Peter H. Reynolds.

DISCUSS THE BOOK
1) Have you ever sat in front of blank piece of paper and not known what to write or draw? Have you ever felt like you “just can’t do it” or that you “are not any good at it”? Discuss with your young one how to work through those feelings.

2) Why do you think Vashi’s teacher said, “Make a mark and see where it takes you?” What does she mean by saying this? Why is getting started sometimes the most difficult part of a project? Discuss with your young one the importance of starting a project even if we don’t know what the outcome might be.

3) Once Vashti starts, she gains confidence and paints many things even though she first thought she couldn’t do it. Have you ever felt like you just didn’t know enough to do a project but then gained confidence by just starting it? Share your experience with your young one and see if they have a similar experience to share with you.

WATCH VIDEOS BASED ON THE BOOK
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t5mGeR4AQdM)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS5YU66s5tc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zS5YU66s5tc)
- [https://vimeo.com/315352814](https://vimeo.com/315352814)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKCsqbiCxE8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vKCsqbiCxE8)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGTI06JMhY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGTI06JMhY)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZQMhdYJhsA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZQMhdYJhsA) (Video of The Dot Song.)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_L43cxDQ-o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_L43cxDQ-o) (includes hand motions to song.)

LISTEN TO MUSIC FROM THE SHOW:
(INSERT LINK TO MUSIC)
DANCE-INSPIRED STORYTELLING

Stages Theatre Company's production of *The Dot* is a *dance-inspired adaptation* of Peter H. Reynolds’ book. Each dot painting from the book comes to life on stage through music and dance—Red Dot, Blue Dot, Yellow Dot, Purple Dot, Big Dot, Little Dots, Negative Space Dot. Before attending the production, watch or discuss the elements of dance with your young one to help them further enjoy the production.

BEFORE THE SHOW

Discuss the different purposes of dance—from ceremonial or traditional and cultural to recreational and artistic. Try exploring the three basic elements of dance.

1) **SPACE** - LEVELS (high, medium, low); DIRECTION (left, right, center); BODY SHAPE (curved, straight, round, square, big, little); PATHWAYS (Movement from one point to another—straight, curved, diagonal)

2) **TIME** - PULSE, TEMPO, RHYTHM

3) **FORCE** - ENERGY of the movement – sharp, strong, light, heavy, restricted, free-flow

*Short Videos about the Elements of Dance:*

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGuD9Geeb2k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UGuD9Geeb2k)

DURING THE SHOW

While watching Stages Theatre Company’s production of *The Dot* see if you can identify the elements of dance.

AFTER THE SHOW

After seeing the production, discuss how the different dance numbers in the show used the elements in different ways – Red Dot, Blue Dot, Purple Dot, etc. How was the Red Dot dance different than the Blue Dot and so forth? How was the interpretation of the dance inspired by the paintings in the book? How did the dance show the different qualities of the paintings and colors? Was this an effective way to interpret the book for the stage? How did the music effect the dance?

Fun Dances to Do with Your Young One

- [https://teachmama.com/youtube-dances-for-kids/](https://teachmama.com/youtube-dances-for-kids/)
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R0vOovq1hs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6R0vOovq1hs)
AFTER THE SHOW

CREATE A “MAKE A MARK” JOURNAL

Talk about how your young one might “make their mark”? Use a blank-page journal to use every day to “make a mark”—a word, a picture, something funny that happened that day, how they may be feeling, something they accomplished, a doodle, a squiggle, a dot!

CREATE ART PROJECTS INSPIRED BY THE DOT

The Dot is an amazing book for many, many amazing art projects. After reading the book and seeing the play, try one or more of these inspiring art projects:

• Use the words ‘Just make a mark and see where it takes you,’ as inspiration for creating artwork. What type of mark will you make? Where will it take you? What materials will you use?
• Make a list of different types of art materials. Choose one of the different materials and make a dot picture. Try several different materials to make different dots. Compare and contrast the pictures. How are they similar? How are they different? Which material was your favorite? Which was the easiest to use? Which was more difficult?
• Just like Vashti did in the book, try making a dot by NOT painting a dot.
• Try other shapes besides a dot and explore creating with it. Make as many different versions of this same shape. Explore varying the size, color, or texture, or using negative space, etc.

VISIT A LOCAL MUSEUM

At the end of the book and show, Vashti’s art is displayed in an art show. Below are local art museums you may visit with your young one to view art on display.

• [https://mmaa.org](https://mmaa.org) (Minnesota Museum of American Art, Free Admission)
• [https://wam.umn.edu](https://wam.umn.edu) (Weisman Art Museum, U of M, Free Admission)
• [https://new.artsmia.org](https://new.artsmia.org) (Minneapolis Institute of Art, Free Admission)
• [https://walkerart.org](https://walkerart.org) (Walker Art Center, Free for ages 0-18)
MORE READING & RESOURCES

- [https://www.peterhreynolds.com/](https://www.peterhreynolds.com/) (author’s official website)
- [https://www.thedotcentral.com/](https://www.thedotcentral.com/) - Website dedicated to *The Dot.*

MORE BOOKS WRITTEN & ILLUSTRATED

BY PETER H. REYNOLDS

The North Star (1997)
Sydney’s Star (2001)
Ish (2004)
So Few of Me (2006)
The Best Kid in the World (2006)
Rose’s Garden (2009)
I’m Here (2011)
Sky Color (2012)
My Very Big Little World (2012)
Playing from the Heart (2016)
Happy Dreamer (2017)
The Word Collector (2018)
Say Something (2019)
Be You (March, 2020)
GROWTH MINDSET

The Dot celebrates creativity and self-expression through a story that shows a child working through struggle. It addresses the idea of risk-taking while learning to do new things.

OTHER GROWTH MINDSET BOOKS

- *The Girl who Never Made Mistakes* by Mark Pett & Gary Rubinstein
- *Rosie Revere, Engineer* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *Iggy Peck, Architect* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *Ada Twist, Scientist* by Andrea Beaty, Illustrated by David Roberts
- *What to Do with an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *What to Do with a Problem?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *What to Do with a Chance?* by Kobi Yamada, Illustrated by Mae Besom
- *Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Saltzberg
- *The Most Magnificent Thing* by Ashley Spires