

“All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten,”

By Charles Jarrett

Wonderful message in Fulghum's “Kindergarten” production

I certainly enjoy theater that makes you think and entertains in the process. Contra Costa Christian Theatre, which performs at Del Valle Theater next to Rossmoor, has a knack for finding mentally and morally uplifting material that informs, edifies and leaves the audience feeling good without preaching. That's what “All I Really Need to Know, I Learned in Kindergarten-Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things” is all about.

This show comes from a wonderful book of the same name by Robert Fulghum. Fulghum's books and writing have placed his works on Oprah's best books list. This show should be a must-see for all living souls. The basic concepts he learned and repeats for us is as follows:

“All I really need to know about how to live and what to do and how to be I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain, but there in the sand pile at school. These are the things I learned:

- € Share everything.
- € Play fair.
- € Don't hit people.
- € Put things back where you found them.
- € Clean up your own mess.
- € Don't take things that aren't yours.
- € Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody.
- € Wash your hands before you eat.
- € Flush.
- € Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
- € Live a balanced life - learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.
- € Take a nap every afternoon.
- € When you go out in the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands and stick together.
- € Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: the roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

€ Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.

€ And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK.

The show takes a number of short stories and skits and uses them to prove these points.

You don't have to be left out and on the fringe of society, you can include yourself, even if it is in a new and unique way, or so says his funny story about Norman, the little pig that had to be included in the story of Cinderella. The story of Charles Boyer's great love for his wife Patricia (married for 44 years before she passed away) is heartwarming.

Story after story brings wonderful little insights on the real messages about making life work, about the fact that growing up and being an adult often entails doing "dirty work," like cleaning out the kitchen drains (no matter how icky they are), picking up doggy doo, changing dirty diapers. Many children consider themselves to be adults, until they are given the inscrutable task of doing "Life's Really Dirty Work," and that's one of the wonderful messages that we can share with others.

Director Kimberly James has selected a terrific cast, mainly consisting of neophyte actors and heartfelt church members (including many members of the same families). They may be mostly amateur, yet they give you a feeling of real professionalism.

I just don't have space to mention all the wonderful actors, which run the gamut from children to adult seniors, but let me tell you that you will absolutely come away with a feeling that this has been a superb evening of entertainment and fun from the heart.

This production runs Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. through Oct. 1 in the Dell Valle Theater. Call 943-SHOW (7469) for reservations. The theater is located at 1963 Tice Valley Blvd., at Acalanes Adult Center next to Rossmoor.