



La Maleta de Maebelle

Maebelle's Suitcase

About the Company

Glass Half Full Theatre, based in Austin, TX, creates original, bilingual performances combining human actors and puppets to explore complex social and environmental issues with optimism and humor. Their work highlights Latinx culture and crosses linguistic and cultural boundaries, engaging audiences in imaginative storytelling.

The company is acclaimed for its inventive use of puppetry and physical storytelling, employing techniques such as tabletop, shadow, body, hand and rod, Czech marionette, and object puppetry. They have received multiple awards for direction, design, writing, acting, and innovation. Glass Half Full's productions, including *Petra and the Wolf*, *Once There Were Six Seasons*, and *The Orchid Flotilla*, tour nationally and are praised for being precise, engaging, and thought-provoking, blending artistry with social relevance.

About the Show

La Maleta de Maebelle (Maebelle's Suitcase) tells the story of Maebelle, a talented hat maker living in her treehouse. She is preparing for the town's annual hat contest when she meets Binkle, a bird struggling with the challenge of carrying too much on his migration south. By sharing her cherished suitcase from her own migration from Colombia, Maebelle helps Binkle confront the importance of what we carry with us both physically and emotionally.

Through humor, heart, puppetry, music, and vibrant storytelling, audiences explore themes of friendship, cultural identity, environmental awareness, and the beauty of memories while learning about the Colombian heritage woven throughout the story.

After the Show: Discussion & Activities

1. What do you notice about Maebelle's personality? How does she help Binkle?
2. What items in the suitcase seem important, and why?
3. How does music, puppetry, or costume help tell the story?
4. How do the characters solve problems together?
5. What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
6. What would you put in your own "suitcase of memories?"
7. Why is it sometimes important to let go of things?
8. How can we be helpful and kind to friends, like Maebelle was to Binkle?

ACTIVITY ONE: Map the Journey

(Look at the map on the right. Follow the flock of white birds flying from Miami to Colombia!)
 Colombia is a country in South America where people speak Spanish. It is next to Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Peru, and Ecuador, and touches both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. Colombia has more kinds of birds than any other country, and many of them fly to the United States and back each year.

Try It!

1. Find Miami on the map.
2. Use your finger to trace the white birds' path all the way to Colombia!
3. Talk about what it means to migrate.
 - Birds migrate to warmer places in the winter and come back in the spring.
 - People sometimes migrate too, when they move to a new home for work, new opportunities, or to find a safer place to live.

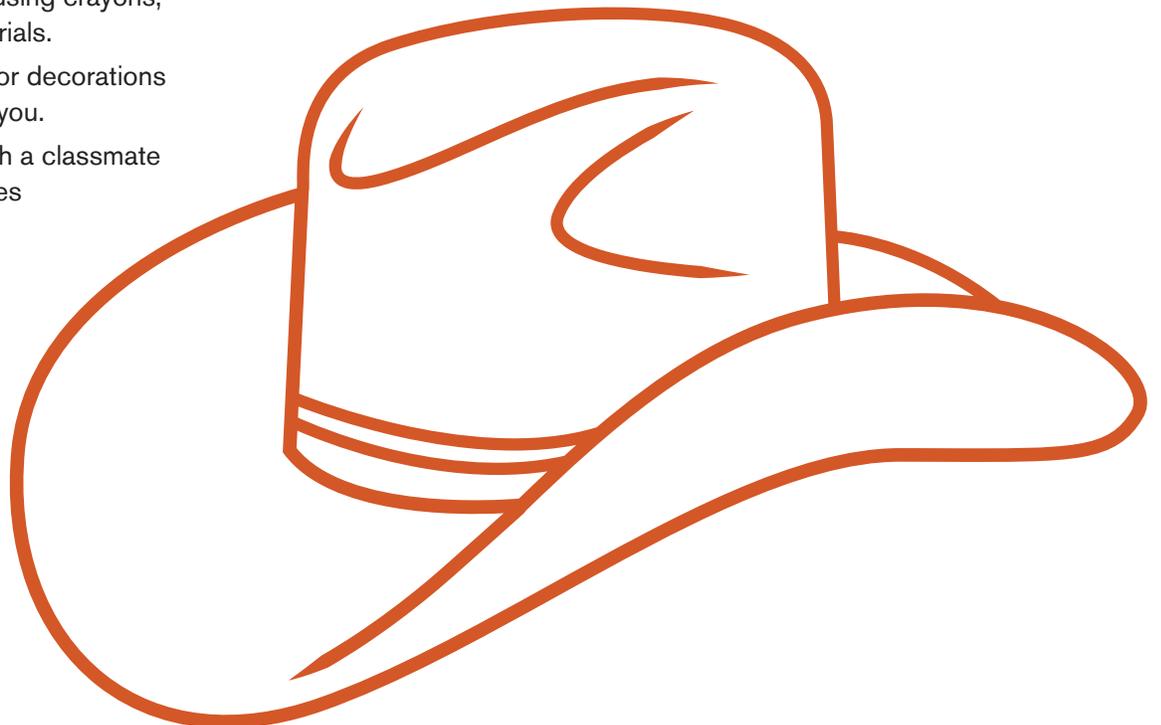


ACTIVITY TWO: Design Your Own Hat

(Use the hat outline below or draw your own hat!)
 Maebelle is a hat maker who loves creating special hats that show her personality and culture. Now it's your turn!

Try It!

1. Design your own hat using crayons, markers, or craft materials.
2. Add colors, patterns, or decorations that tell a story about you.
3. Share your design with a classmate and explain what makes your hat unique!



ACTIVITY THREE:

Vocabulary (Bilingual Focus)

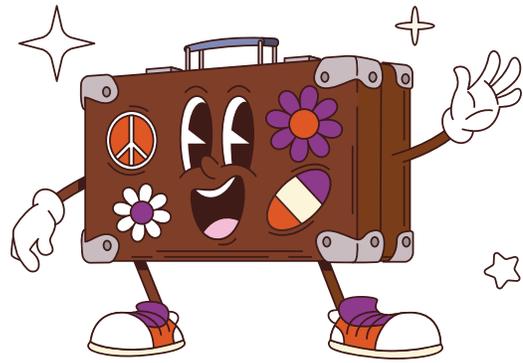
Share these words with your students. Ask if they know what they mean or heard them in the show:



Useful Resources

Here's a list of **books and resources** elementary teachers can use to explore themes related to *La Maleta de Maebelle (Maebelle's Suitcase)*:

- 1. Migration: Incredible Animal Journeys**
by Sy Montgomery
 - Explains animal migration in kid-friendly language with engaging illustrations.
- 2. All Are Welcome**
by Alexandra Penfold
 - Celebrates cultural diversity, community, and inclusion in schools.
- 3. My Papi Has a Motorcycle**
by Isabel Quintero
 - A bilingual story highlighting Latinx culture, family, and community.
- 4. The Memory Box / El Caja de Recuerdos**
by Mira Lobe
 - Focuses on memory, personal stories, and emotional reflection, in a format suitable for young readers.
- 5. The Hatmaker's Heart: Adventures in Creativity**
(classroom craft resource)
 - Provides simple hat-making and creative projects for students, connecting to the artistic theme of the show.



ACTIVITY FOUR: Creative Writing

- Have students write a short story about a suitcase they would take on a journey.
- Include an object that is very meaningful and explain why.



Curriculum Connections: Florida Sunshine State Standards

- ELA:** LAFS.K-5.RL.3.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
- Social Studies:** SS.K.G.1.1 Use maps to locate places, including continents, countries, and oceans.
- Science / Environmental Education:** SC.3.L.17.1 Explain how animals, including birds, depend on their habitats and seasonal changes for survival.
- Art / Music:** VA.K.C.1.1 Explore how visual arts, music, and performance communicate stories, culture, and personal expression.



MTC Summer Camp Scholarship Program

Teachers – Help Us Discover Miami’s Next Young Artist!

MTC invites teachers to nominate students who would benefit from a transformative summer in the arts!

Who We’re Looking For:

Students **ages 7–14** who show creativity, enthusiasm, or potential, but may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.

Campers explore:

- Playwriting & storytelling
- Singing & choreography
- Dance & improvisation
- Set & prop design
- Teamwork, creativity, and confidence

New! MTC Young Leaders Fellowship

For teens ages 15–18

A hands-on paid mentorship program that builds leadership, creative, and professional skills in musical theater production. Fellows assist with camp operations, rehearsals, and performances, gaining real-world experience in the arts!

Nominate a Student Today!

Your recommendation can open the door for a young person to shine this summer. Email info@mtcmiami.org for more information.

ABOUT THE CAMP:

- June 8 – August 7, 2026
- Hot lunch is provided daily
- Led by Camp Director Amy Siama and MTC’s professional teaching artists
- Each session ends with a live performance on MTC’s Main Stage!

CAMP SESSIONS:

- **Session 1:** June 8 – June 18 (2 weeks)
- **Session 2:** June 22 – July 2 (2 weeks)
- **Session 3:** July 13 – August 7 (4 weeks)

(scholarship recipients must attend at least two sessions of camp to qualify.)

MTC
miami theater center

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