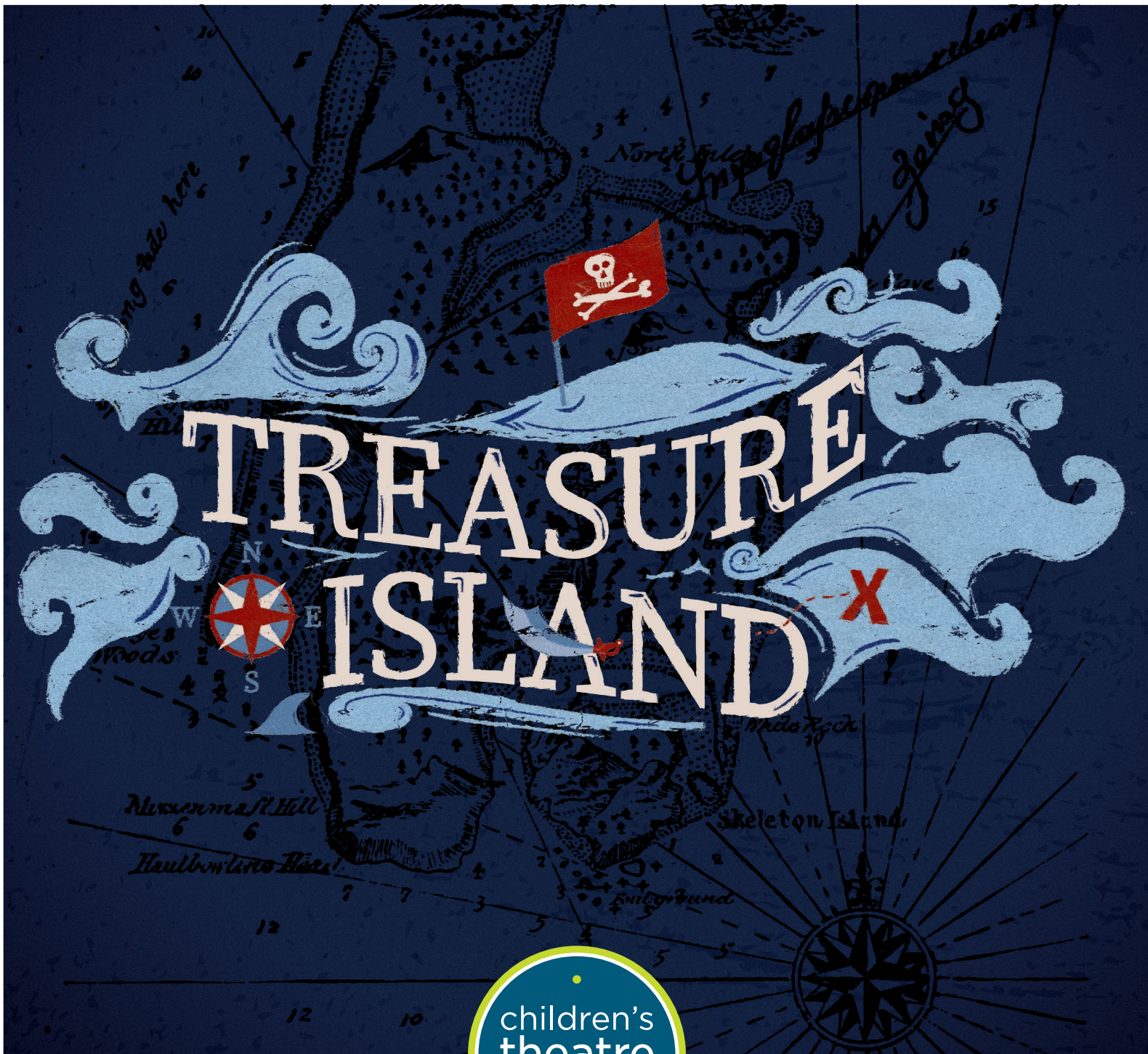


Treasure Island

Audience Guide

September 9-October 19, 2025



2025

children's
theatre
company

2026

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At CTC, our mission is to create extraordinary theatre experiences that educate, challenge, and inspire young people and their communities. This Audience Guide is just one of the ways in which we aim to enhance your experience and further your engagement with the shows on stage.

It includes a summary, context, fun facts, and activities plus details that can help you decide what’s right for your kids.

If you have any further questions, please contact our friendly Ticket Office Associates at 612.874.0400 during their regular business hours or email them at tickets@childrenstheatre.org.

Summary

Stuart Paterson's stage adaptation of *Treasure Island* remains faithful to Robert Louis Stevenson's swashbuckling tale of courage, betrayal, and adventure on the high seas. The story follows young Jim Hawkins, who stumbles upon a treasure map hidden in the possessions of a mysterious and menacing lodger, Billy Bones. This discovery launches Jim on a perilous voyage aboard the *Hispaniola* with Squire Trelawney, Doctor Livesey, and a ship crewed in part by pirates in disguise, led by the duplicitous and charismatic Long John Silver. As Jim's boyish wonder turns to grim realization, he must navigate treachery, survive mutiny, and fight for his life and ideals.

The first act traces the journey from the Admiral Benbow Inn to the island, building suspense through Silver's manipulation and the growing danger onboard. Act Two shifts to the island, where battles erupt, allies fall, and Jim's bravery is tested as he outwits the pirates with the help of the marooned Ben Gunn. The story blends fast-paced action with emotional depth, culminating in a desperate struggle for survival and justice.

Key Themes

Coming of Age: Jim's transformation from an innocent innkeeper's son to a courageous and resourceful hero underscores the classic coming-of-age journey, marked by moral choices and bravery under pressure.

Deception and Loyalty: Trust is continually tested, particularly through Long John Silver's cunning duplicity. The contrast between true loyalty (Captain Smollett, Livesey, Gray) and betrayal (Silver, Israel Hands) drives the emotional tension.

Green vs. Honor: The lust for treasure exposes characters' deepest motivations. While some are corrupted by greed, others—like Jim—ultimately value honor, friendship, and integrity above riches.



Character Guide

Jim Hawkins: Our young hero and narrator. Jim starts out working at his family's inn but finds himself swept into a wild sea adventure. Brave, curious, and quick-thinking. Jim discovers just how complicated people can be—especially pirates.

Long John Silver: A charming and mysterious ship's cook. He's friendly and helpful...but also hiding a dangerous secret. Jim isn't sure whether to fear him or admire him.

Captain Smollett: The strict but trustworthy captain of the Hispaniola. He believes in discipline and honor—and knows that not everyone on board can be trusted.

Squire Trelawney: A wealthy and excited landowner who funds the treasure-hunting voyage. He means well but often says too much to the wrong people.

Dr. Livesey: Smart and steady, Dr. Livesey is both a doctor and a voice of reason. He looks out for Jim and helps lead the fight to survive when things get dangerous.

Billy Bones: A rough old sailor who stays at Jim's family's inn. He carries a mysterious map—and a warning to watch out for the one-legged man.

Blind Pew: A terrifying, blind pirate who delivers the “Black Spot” (a pirate warning) and brings danger to Jim's doorstep.

Ben Gunn: An eccentric castaway who's been marooned on Treasure Island for years. He knows more about the treasure—and the pirates—than he lets on.

Israel Hands, George Merry, and the Pirates: These crew members pretend to be regular sailors but are really working with Long John Silver. They're tough, tricky, and not afraid to mutiny to get what they want.

Content Advisories

Language: 2 out of 5 stars ★★☆☆☆

The pirates sing “Dead and be damned...” Israel Hands dreams of a land where “rivers flow with rum.” Trelawney says, “I own myself an ass...” when he realizes he messed up. A frustrated pirate asks, “What damned tree?” A pirate says, “...and singin’ that damned song...” Throughout the play, characters sing, “Fifteen men on the dead man’s chest—Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum! Drink the The Devil have done the rest—Yo-ho-ho and a bottle of rum!”

Themes and Situations: 3 out of 5 stars ★★★☆☆

The play begins in a bar, and there is drinking. Pirates ask for rum throughout. The crew drinks grog. Israel Hands drinks wine. Jim Hawkins, a young boy, is often in danger and ends up killing a pirate. There are gun and knife fights throughout and multiple characters are killed.

Violence and Scariness: 5 out of 5 stars ★★★★★

A pirate bends back Jim’s arm and threatens to cut him deep. Captain Bones falls down dead after receiving the black spot. A blind pirate gets trampled by a horse and dies. A pirate pulls a knife and lunges at Jim. Long John Silver says, “I’ll wring his head off his neck with these hands!” There is a large gunfight where multiple people die. Israel Hands cuts Mr. Arrow’s safety rope, and he vanishes overboard. He is left for dead. A sailor turns his back on Long John Silver, and he hits him with his crutch and then murders him with his knife. Jim shoots Israel Hands at point blank range, and he falls overboard dead. Long John Silver shoots and kills a pirate that is threatening Jim.

Sensory Advisories: 4 out of 5 stars ★★★★☆

There will be shouting and screams of pain as the characters fight. There is a large gunfight that will include live gunshots. If someone in your group is sensitive to loud sounds or heightened sensory moments, we offer [sensory-friendly performances](#) with adjusted lighting and sound. For other performances, you’re welcome to request noise-cancelling headphones or earplugs or take a break in our quiet room.

Potentially Anxious Moments: 4 out of 5 stars ★★★★☆

There is a lot of fighting and peril throughout. Jim is forced to make some difficult decisions and has to grow up quickly. Jim is often in danger and almost gets killed multiple times. Jim shoots and kills someone at point blank range. The pirates are spooked by the black spot and the thought of the island being haunted by Captain Flint’s ghost.

Please contact the Ticket Office with any questions at
612.874.0400 or **tickets@childrenstheatre.org**.

From Page to Screen to Stage

Children's Theatre Company's production of *Treasure Island* is an adaptation of the classic novel written by Robert Louis Stevenson in 1883. Stevenson began creating the story when he and his family were stuck inside during a rainy vacation in Scotland. He used the idea of a secret treasure map to entertain his stepson with stories of pirates and adventure. Since the book was first published, it has been adapted for the stage, TV, film, and even video games!



Walt Disney's *Treasure Island* (1950)
- The first film version in color



Muppet Treasure Island (1996)



Treasure Planet (2002)



Pirates and Sailors

At first glance, everyone aboard the *Hispaniola* seems like a regular sailor. But hidden among the crew are pirates in disguise—men with their own secret plans for the treasure. One of the most exciting parts of the story is watching those masks start to slip.

How can you tell a real sailor from a pirate in disguise?

As you watch the play, keep an eye out for when the pirates start acting suspicious.

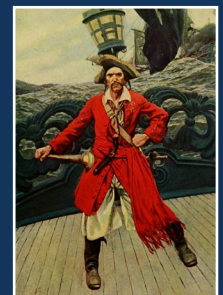


Sailors

- They are lawful members of the ship's crew.
- Their work typically involves transporting cargo or passengers.
- Sailors have a strict hierarchical structure with very specific roles and responsibilities.

Pirates

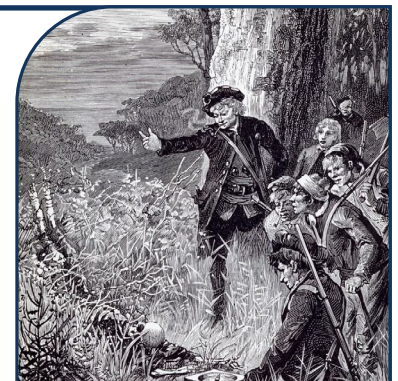
- Pirates are criminals and engage in illegal activities like raiding, robbery, and violence against other ships and their crews.
- They are driven by greed and a thirst for treasure.
- Pirates have their own codes and hierarchies that can be unique to each band of pirates.



Did real pirates bury treasure?

While pirates certainly sought and stole valuable cargo, they almost never buried it. They usually turned around and spent it quickly. Pirates also didn't make secret treasure maps to help find buried treasure. Treasure maps and pirates are perpetually linked in our minds largely because of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and the many adaptations that have followed.

Illustration from *Treasure Island* showing Long John Silver and the pirates as they search for buried treasure



FAMOUS PIRATES

Blackbeard

Even though he was only active as a pirate for two years (1716-1718), Blackbeard is one of the most well-known pirates to have ever lived. He had a knack for theatricality and tried to make himself look especially fearsome to intimidate his victims. He would twist pieces of fuse into his thick, tangled hair that he would light during battles. The lit fuses surround his face with smoke, which created a terrifying image. Due to his fame, the Royal Navy targeted him specifically, and he was killed in battle.



Henry Morgan

Morgan's exploits were bold and often bloodthirsty, especially when he burned a Panama city to the ground. Morgan captured a port in Panama in part by creating a human shield of priests, women, and the mayor of the town. Despite his actions, he ended up serving as the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica and passed anti-piracy laws.



Ching Shih

Ching Shih took over her husband's pirate confederation after his death. She expanded the confederation and commanded an estimated 1,800 ships and 70,000 men at the height of her powers. In the end, she successfully negotiated a surrender to Chinese authorities that allowed her to retain a substantial fleet and avoid prosecution.



Captain Kidd

William Kidd started his maritime career as a privateer with the British Royal Navy. He was asked to captain a ship to find and attack known pirates. He wasn't very successful at finding pirates, and his crew pressured him to essentially turn into a pirate himself. He successfully captured a large ship in the Indian Ocean and buried some of the treasure on an island near New York. He was one of the few pirates known to have buried some of his treasure.



What to Watch and Listen for On Stage

Get ready to put your observation skills to the test! As you watch the play, pay close attention to the characters, staging, and storytelling choices.

Look for...

1. The Black Spot. What does the Black Spot mean?
2. Lighting effects. How is the lighting used to portray a storm?
3. The use of shadows. What are shadows used to convey?

Listen for...

1. Live music. How does the music affect the mood of the story?
2. A parrot. Can you remember any of the words that she says? If you listen closely, do you think the parrot gives away Long John Silver's true nature?
3. A voice being used to spook the pirates on their search for treasure. Who is the voice pretending to be?

Reed Sigmund portrays the infamous Long John Silver



Treasure Island Book Discussion Guide

Reading *Treasure Island* before seeing the stage version? Great choice! This discussion guide will help you explore key ideas, characters, and turning points in the book—so when the lights go down and the ship sets sail onstage, you'll be ready to dive into the action with fresh eyes.

Pick up the book at your local library or read it free online:
[Treasure Island by Robert Louis Stevenson](#)

Big Questions to Get Started

1. What makes a great adventure story?
 - How does *Treasure Island* deliver thrills, danger, and excitement? What moments kept you turning the pages?
2. How does Jim change throughout the story?
 - What does he learn about bravery, trust, and responsibility? Do you think he becomes a hero by the end?
3. Who surprised you the most?
 - Did any character turn out to be different than they first seemed? Why do you think Robert Louis Stevenson chose to make so many characters morally complicated?
4. Would you join the voyage?
 - If you were offered a spot on the *Hispaniola*, would you go? What role would you want to play on the ship?

Scene-by-Scene Reflections

The Admiral Benbow Inn

- Why do you think Billy Bones is so afraid of being found? What clues does Stevenson give us about his past?
- How does Jim handle the danger that suddenly invades his peaceful life?

Aboard the *Hispaniola*

- What role does Long John Silver play in the early part of the voyage? Why is Jim drawn to him?
- Captain Smollett and Doctor Livesey are suspicious. How do they sense trouble before it happens?

On the Island

- What makes the island feel mysterious and dangerous?
- Ben Gunn is a strange and memorable character. What does his backstory add to the adventure?

The Mutiny and the Treasure

- What does the story suggest about greed? Does the treasure bring happiness to anyone?
- How are different types of courage shown in the final chapters?

Themes to Watch for Onstage

As you watch the play, keep these themes in mind:

- Loyalty vs. Betrayal—Who stays true to their word, and who doesn't?
- Appearances Can Be Deceiving—Who isn't what they seem at first?
- Growing Up—How does Jim's view of the world change as the adventure unfolds?
- How are different types of courage shown in the final chapters?



Before You Go: What to Expect from the Play

The play may not include every detail from the book, but it captures the spirit of the story—its suspense, humor, action, and emotion. As you watch:

- Notice which scenes are most dramatic onstage—and why.
- Look for how music, lighting, and movement help tell the story.
- Think about how the actors bring well-known characters like Jim, Silver, and Ben Gunn to life.

Build Your Own Adventure: Story Writing Guide

Ever dreamed of sailing the open sea, hunting for hidden treasure, or facing off against pirates? Now it's your turn to create the adventure! Use the steps below to plan and write your own thrilling story—full of twists, turns, and treasure maps.

Step 1: Choose Your Hero

Who is the main character of your story? Is it *you*, a new pirate captain, a clever stowaway, or a brave animal sidekick?

Examples:

- A book-loving kid who finds a real treasure map
- A parrot who knows where the treasure is hidden
- A sailor's apprentice with a secret past

Step 2: Set Sail for Adventure

Where does your story take place? Pick (or create) a wild and exciting setting.

Ideas:

- A foggy island filled with booby traps
- A haunted shipwreck in shark-infested waters
- A volcano that only erupts when you lie!

Step 3: Choose a Challenge

What danger or mystery does your hero face?

Some Options:

- A pirate crew that may (or may not) be trustworthy
- A rival treasure hunter trying to beat you to the gold
- A map with clues written in riddles

Step 4: Make a Choice (or Two!)

Now add a "Choose Your Path" moment—just like in a choose-your-own-adventure book.

Example:

You come to a fork in the jungle trail.

- If you go left toward the echoing cave, turn to page 3.
- If you go right toward the overgrown ruins, turn to page 5.

(You don't have to write full pages—just describe the different options and what could happen next!)

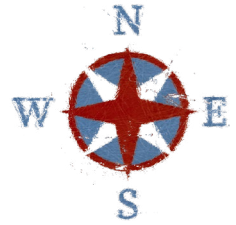
Step 5: Treasure—or Trouble?

How does your story end? Does your hero find the treasure? Do they learn something important instead? Is there a surprise twist?

Writing Tips

- Keep your sentences active—make things happen!
- Use the five senses to bring your setting to life.
- Don't be afraid to get silly, scary, or mysterious.

Which *Treasure Island* Character Are You?



Take this short quiz to discover your inner adventurer! Choose the answer that fits you best for each question—then add up your points to find your match.

1. What's your idea of a great adventure?
 - A. Exploring somewhere no one's been before (1 point)
 - B. Sneaking through secret tunnels and finding treasure (2 points)
 - C. Being left alone to do my own thing (3 points)
 - D. Leading a team to safety through dangerous terrain (4 points)

2. Your best friend is in trouble. What do you do?
 - A. Help right away, even if it's risky (1 point)
 - B. Think fast and make a clever plan (2 points)
 - C. Hesitate—I'm not always sure who to trust (3 points)
 - D. Stay calm and take charge of the situation (4 points)

3. How do you feel about rules?
 - A. I follow them...mostly (1 point)
 - B. Rules are useful, unless they get in my way (2 points)
 - C. I don't really pay attention to rules (3 points)
 - D. Rules keep everyone alive and in order (4 points)

4. What's one item you'd bring on a deserted island?
 - A. A compass (1 point)
 - B. A treasure map (2 points)
 - C. Cheese or chocolate (3 points)
 - D. A survival guide (4 points)

5. How would your friends describe you?
 - A. Brave and curious (1 point)
 - B. Smart and a little sneaky (2 points)
 - C. Quirky but kind (3 points)
 - D. Wise and dependable (4 points)

Tally your points, then turn to page 13 to see your results!

CTC Theatre Etiquette

At CTC, we encourage audiences to engage with the live theatre experience and react freely. It's ok to laugh if something is funny, exclaim if something is surprising, gasp if something is scary, and maybe even dance along in your seats if the music inspires you. We value the real-time, honest reactions of our audiences.

We do, however, thank you for your partnership in making sure that any reactions from your kids are kind and respectful towards the actors onstage and towards all of the people who worked so hard to make the show possible.

Accessibility

Mobility Accessibility

The Red Lobby and UnitedHealth Group Stage are on the 2nd floor. At the building entrance, turn right and head through the Mia (Minneapolis Institute of Art) entrance. Then turn left just inside the entrance and go up the flight of 28 stairs to get to the lobby. Or you can use the elevator to the LEFT of the entrance doors. The balcony is accessed by going up another flight of 18 stairs. There is no elevator access to the balcony level.

An Accessible/All-Gender restroom is located next to the elevator on the 2nd floor in the Red Lobby. Additional restrooms are located down one floor near the entrance to the theatre.

Quiet Room/Sensory Sensitivities

The Quiet Room is located at the rear left side of the main floor of the UnitedHealth Group Stage. There are 3 stairs to get to the seating in the Quiet Room. The Quiet Room is separated from the audience by a glass window, so patrons can verbalize freely. Those utilizing the Quiet Room can still see and hear the performance. The performance is also live streamed in the lobby. Please feel free to come and go from the Quiet Room as you need to throughout the show.

Please let an usher know if someone in your group would benefit from a fidget, ear plugs, noise canceling headphones, or coloring/activity sheets during your visit.

Assistive Listening Devices

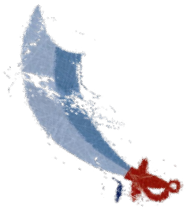
Please let an usher know if you would like to use an assistive listening device. These devices come equipped with an over-the-ear earpiece. This earpiece can be unplugged, and other devices, such as cochlear implants, can be plugged into the receiver using the 1/8" jack. If you will be plugging in your own device, please bring the appropriate cord as CTC does not have these on hand.

Sign Interpretation and Audio Description

Each CTC production has a sign interpreted and/or audio described performance for each production. These performances are noted in the [list of performance dates](#).

Prayer/Private Nursing Space

During your visit, please ask a member of our staff to use our private space for nursing, pumping, prayer, or other needs.



Which *Treasure Island* Character Are You? Results

5-7 Points: You're Jim Hawkins

You're brave, curious, and willing to jump into adventure—even when it's scary. You're learning who to trust and how to stand on your own.

8-11 Points: You're Long John Silver

You're clever, charming, and always thinking two steps ahead. People trust you—but they should probably keep one eye open!

12-14 Points: You're Ben Gunn

You're a little unpredictable, but full of heart. You've got stories to tell and secrets to share—once someone earns your trust.

15-20 Points: You're Captain Smollett

You're steady, responsible, and a natural leader. You might be serious, but you're exactly who people need in a crisis.

Further Resources

Learn More About the “Golden Age” of Piracy



Learn More with Royal Museums Greenwich - [The 'Golden Age' of Piracy](#)