

Students dressed in black hooded robes represented the black plague, which killed thousands in medieval Europe. They were part of "Castles," a play presented at Trinity Episcopal School.

PHOTOS BY STEVE LYTTLE - slyttle@charlotteobserver.com

Medieval England comes alive at school

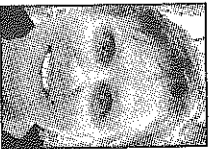
Students put on play to learn about community

BY STEVE LYTTLE
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A group of kings, cooks, kennel-keepers, jesters and a medieval Elvis helped tell the story of 14th-century England recently to a group of students and parents at Trinity Episcopal School in Charlotte's uptown.

Third-graders at the school-staged "Castles," a musical written by third-grade teacher Tachi Dellinger.

"This is the third year we've done this with our third-graders, but I add a little something each year, to make it different," Dellinger said.



Basically, "Castles" is a means of telling about life in England, about two or three centuries before the Renaissance. A cast of 44 students learned nearly a dozen songs and skits, set around the backdrop of a castle that the youths built.

"We've been studying about

communities as part of the third-grade curriculum," Dellinger said. "So in this play, we describe everyone who was a part of the castle community."

That included kings, like Richard the Lion-Hearted, Edward I and Arthur (of Round Table fame). It also included the people who cleaned the castle, cooked, and cared for the royalty's animals. Also featured were characters representing "black death," the plague that killed hundreds of thousands in Europe.

And there was entertainment. This year, third-grader Will Miller played an Elvis-style character, one of the troubadours who performed at the castle.

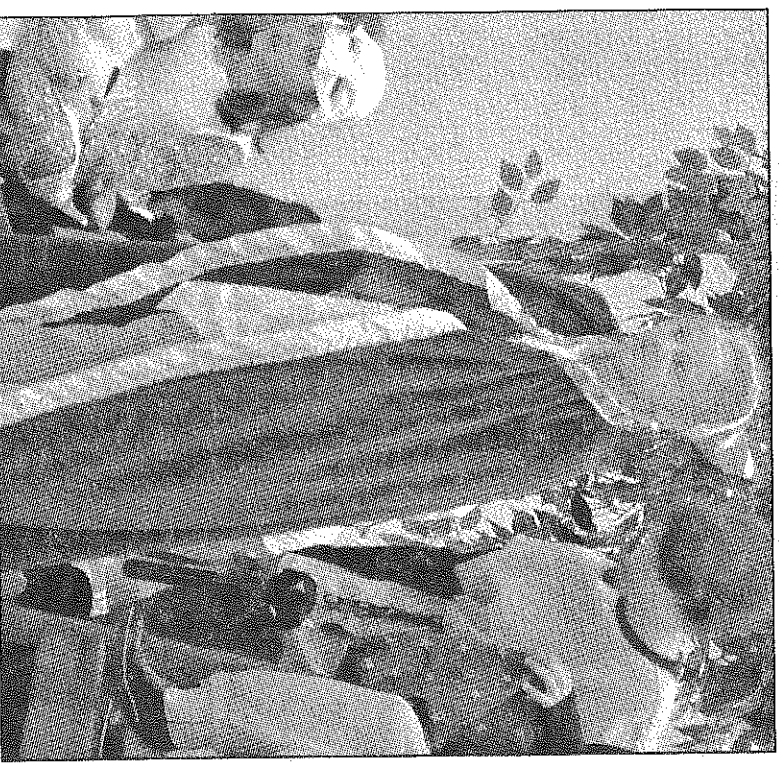
The whole show was held together by student Lucy Murrey, as Merlin the magician.

Dellinger said students also learned how the castle was defended.

"We had the students try to deal with a siege situation," she said.

Dellinger said the key was to teach students that every person had a role.

"Every single job was important," she said. "And everyone depended on everyone else. That's the way of any community."



Lucy Murrey, as Merlin, served as master of ceremonies for the trip through an English castle in the play "Castles," recently performed by third-graders at Trinity Episcopal School in uptown Charlotte.

CORRECTION

An item in the holiday lights list incorrectly identified a home in the Grove Park neighborhood. The home at 6624 Lakeside Drive belongs to Bob and Lynn Laughlin.