

Lesson 1: What is Theatre?/Observation

OBJECTIVE: Students will demonstrate the understanding that theatre is the art of telling stories through acting, and how observing the world around you is a first step to becoming a great actor.

MATERIALS:

- Large writing surface (dry erase board/chart paper)
- A bowl with slips of paper that have different emotions written on them (see list on page 7)

I recommend beginning each session with a few words about what the goal/plan is for the day, then immediately jumping into a warm-up activity. Especially with young kids, it's important to get them moving and engaged as soon as possible.

GREETING: Greet the students, introduce a little bit about yourself, then immediately begin the warm-up.

WARM-UP: Drama Game: Stop, Go, Jump!

- Tell the students to take the stage. (From this point on “stage” will refer to any open playing area.)
- When you say *GO*, they are to walk around the stage trying to fill up all the space, not leaving any gaps.
- When you say *STOP* they should stop. Try this out a few times.
- When you say *CLAP* they should clap, when you say *JUMP* they should jump. Try this out a few times, then mix it in with *GO* and *STOP*.
- When you say *KNEES* they should bend to put their hands on their knees, when you say *SKY* they should reach up toward the sky. Try this out, mixing it in with the previous commands.
- After they've gotten the hang of this, kick it up to Level 2. They are now to do everything in exact opposite. *STOP* means *GO*, *GO* means *STOP*, *CLAP* means *JUMP*, *JUMP* means *CLAP*, *KNEES* means *SKY*, *SKY* means *KNEES*.
- Try out this new level for awhile, slowly at first, then getting increasingly faster.
- Finally, kick it up to Level 3. You, the instructor, will be doing the actions literally as you say them, however the students should continue doing the exact opposite.
- Gather the students into a circle to reflect:
 - *Why do you think we played this game? What skills were we working on?*
 - *As an actor, you're going to be required to do things that sometimes feels unnatural, to step outside your comfort zone, and to always be focused and listening for direction. This helps prepare us for that.*

EXPLORATION: What is theatre? What makes a good actor?

- Ask the students if they can describe what theatre is.
 - *How is it different than reading a book?*
 - *How is it different than watching a movie?*

Have the students seated for this next activity. The best time to have the students seated to explore a new concept or idea is immediately following the warm-up activity.