

# Drama

Story and Drama

A short guide on education through drama

## Contents

Methods

Principles Intended to be Taught

Framework of the Session

Cautions and Preliminaries

## Methods

### Cards

Have a set of cards or sheets with different story-lines on for the groups to choose a drama from of their own choice.

### Characters

Have a bowl of characters one can choose from - either randomly or selectively.

### Circular Questions

Taking a different question, pass it around the group, which may be a subgroup, for everyone to offer an answer to. This opens up the possibilities of the drama before it is actually enacted.

### Complementary

This is where the group is split up into little groups who each tackle a different part of a story, often with the same characters. The story can then be performed piecewise as a continuous sequence of the individual groups' acts.

### Compositional

At the last part of each lesson, one could ask, "What would you do in such-and-such a situation?" and in this way create a play over a long period of time, to be performed later.

### Conducting

One, either myself or children in groups, can conduct a drama as a conductor conducts an audience.

### Continuation

By giving a story, either factual or fictional, from me or from one group to another, one poses the question "What happens next?" and the groups must complete the story using one of the techniques here listed.

### Discussion

Without any intention of performing the result in any way, this is simply the discussing through of a narrative, either one previously known or creating the story as one goes along. The ideas are not crystallised in any particular form. This teaches the overall gist of the flow of natural ideas without the distraction of concentrating upon planning any definite dramatic ideas.

### Exaggeration

### Facts

Factual dramas are educative in material knowledge

## Feedback

Ask afterwards the effect of the drama and what it has taught.

## Fictional

Fictional dramas are educative in compositional creativity and learning the principles behind factual reality by exploring invented situations.

## Follow My Leader

One in the group, or myself, must be imitated by the rest, or followed through the same environment.

## Freezing

This is where I say to the actors of their drama, "Freeze!" and allow members of the audience to go up to them and ask them what they are doing or thinking at that moment in terms of their character.

## Game

Drama can be conducted in the style of a giant game. For example, in battles you throw a die to see who wins a fight, you move around "squares" in the room either of yourself or by dice; you can have stamina points, like the characters in a board game performed in real-life; and you can include the "player" also.

## Groups

A drama can be performed by a group of people, without any need for a connection to what another group may be performing.

## Guidance

One person guides others like a tour-operator through a spot they know well.

## Homeworks

This is a difficult thing to prescribe. Ask the children to think of an idea to perform next session, or, at night, just to go through in the mind an idea, so that its acting is not ruined by the attempt being too novel, and neither ruined by the acting losing its spontaneity by being over-planned. Perhaps a person can plan the prayers for next time.

## Identity

The drama units all plan or perform the same drama simultaneously.

## Improvisation

This is the acting of a drama, either on your own or in a group, as the final product without any planning whatsoever, except perhaps a theme to bind it together.

## Individuality

Drama can be done individually.

## Invocation

With improvisation, the concern over creating the storyline as you perform it can reduce the experience and unexpectedness of it, for you also have a feeling for what you are going to do next. With invocation, one person stands apart and takes the role of narrator, calling out the events of the story, thus relieving the improvising actors'

minds of the task of creating, making for a fuller experience of the act itself and adding a surprise factor.

## **Melodrama**

## **Mime**

The narration of words in drama tends to distance the actor from the simple experience of what he is acting. The actor's involvement with the drama is at its peak when the words are taken away. Thus mime is useful for teaching an intuitive, experiential approach.

## **Mimicry**

## **Mythical**

Mythical dramas explore the inner meaning and intuitive experience of our relationship to the universe in its spiritual form.

## **Pantomime**

## **Parody**

## **Pathing**

As one discusses different possibilities as courses of action to certain events, a special group set aside performs whatever is being discussed or proposed as it is proposed; thus one discusses not just in verbal words but with a real-life motion picture display

## **Planning**

Sometimes it is good to plan a drama first. This exercises the actors' ability to see ahead solely by the reasonings of the mind.

## **Props**

The addition of a physical object to the drama, either symbolic, representative or literal, takes the drama more fully into a reality.

## **Questions**

A circle of raising questions about anything in creation is good both for the mind and for raising questions to be answered by acting out the situation. The use of questions ensures that the acting is relevant to the children's interest and educative needs.

## **Role-Playing**

By giving each child in a role-playing group certain characteristics, spiritual or material, exaggerated or realistic, one can create Chaos (showing how certain characteristics embody the seeds of disorder), one can create Order (showing how certain characteristics embody order) or genuine life-like situations for the experience of how and why a situation occurs or what it is like.

## **Role-Reversal**

This is the giving to a person of a role which they would normally criticise - for example, the child being given the

role of the teacher or the parent, and the teacher or parent being given the role of the child.

## **Self-Creative**

You create a story yourself with no or little help, written or in the mind, and perhaps also act it out.

## **Silence**

In silence people become aware of a drama going on around them which they are normally unaware of. Ask the children to see if they can hear what is going on in the other classrooms, or to examine the circumstances in their mind of any noise that they can hear.

## **Singing**

The use of natural singing and dancing, where the durations, pitches and dynamics, and words or actions if included, do not fall into any predictable form, but are entirely spontaneous and representative of one's inner impulses, is a drama which releases to oneself one's self.

## **Slow Motion**

A drama does not have to be acted out continuously, but can be discussed every several actions or continuously by the gathering as to what is happening and why.

## **Special Areas**

The use of special areas for certain types activity with different attitudes means that that attitude becomes associated with that region of space and so the attitude is conjured up more powerfully and more quickly.

## **Stories**

Here the audience listens to a story, either read from paper or given approximately, or improvised. For the best educative value, and enjoyment, ask the audience to watch out for certain points in the story before you read it. This provides both a framework of events in which to place the narration, and also ensures that they don't miss the bits you want them especially to think about.

## **Suggestions Box**

For anonymous questions to be drama-solved

## **Suitability**

Roles should always be suitable to the actor's needs. For example, a noisy person playing a quiet child. The content must be relevant to the children's interests.

## **Symbolic**

One acts symbolically, like one's dreams, but more conscious of its portraying one's inner self than with the myth drama

## **Tapes**

Taped music or narrations to listen to or act or dance to; or use a tape machine for recording rather than playing.

## **Underexaggeration**

## **Video**

The video camera could be used to record dramas.

## Visionary

Drama is about the fantastic world of the imagination. To achieve the maximum expression of one's imagination, one must remove all distractions from the world around one. This happens very naturally with sleep, but it can also be brought about artificially quite easily.

1. Lie the person down, so that their muscles can be relaxed;
2. ensure that their limbs are not in a tense position - for example, no crossed legs or arms: put the arms beside each other on the navel;
3. draw their attention to the four possible ways to breath, breathing in with the nose or mouth, breathing out with the nose or mouth, different people preferring different combinations; let their breathing be relaxed and unrushed;
4. beginning with the feet, go through all the parts of their body - feet, lower leg, upper leg, hands, lower arms, upper arms, abdomen, lower face, upper face, head and chest, and for each tell them to relax that part, until the whole body is relaxed, and remind them that any part that is now not relaxed should be so;
5. ask them to imagine their favourite spot and let them settle in;
6. narrate to the imaginer a story in the second person singular. The method works by removing all distractions from the mind to the imaginative process, thus liberating the imagination. It is in no way a form of hypnosis as no sleep results and the person can get up of their own accord at any moment. Due to the extraordinary imagination of young children it should not be used with them. Beautiful imaginings are always recommended, and any ugly narration offered must always be resolved to a happy or satisfactory end.

## Vocal

The physical performance of a drama tends to attach the actor to his situation, thereby inhibiting a detached, impartial attitude to the scenario. The removal of the physical actions, retaining only the words, develops the rational, logical approach to situations.

## Principles Intended to be Taught

- ◆ History of the Prophets, Religions and Nations.
- ◆ Experience of human predicaments.
- ◆ How and why things happen.
- ◆ Different personalities and perspectives.
- ◆ Different social, geographical and professional environments.
- ◆ Bahá'í teachings - situations to make sense of them.
- ◆ Psychology (somehow!)
- ◆ Organisation - working and failing.
- ◆ Responsibility.
- ◆ Different professions.

## Framework of the Session

- ◆ Reminders for suggestions and comments.
- ◆ Prayerful reading to open read by one of them, perhaps written by themselves.
- ◆ Story and drama.
- ◆ Close drama.
- ◆ Closing prayers or silence.

- ◆ Ensure energy is diffused so that they don't disrupt the following class.

## Cautions and Preliminaries

- ◆ Find out who in the class can play what instruments or is talented in some matter.
- ◆ Find out dates of play-goals where we will be required to perform.
- ◆ Medical inhibitions - asthma, infirmities, etc.
- ◆ Can everyone hear me?
- ◆ Their obligations - good behaviour, attentiveness, not to keep the class waiting, not too noisy, not to wish always to be the star, no contention, and to have fun.
- ◆ Failed obligations - either distract them from their disruption by announcing something, and/or role-play the problem to investigate the results of meeting and failing the relevant obligations.
- ◆ Don't let them be dummies - let them, wherever possible, take the active role when I am taking it, such as reading prayers. But sometimes it is better that they listen, as they can be too busy reading it aloud to comprehend it. Get them to shout out their prayers - "Throw your voice over here!"
- ◆ The drama should make everyone feel that they have equally good roles.
- ◆ Observe those who slip into dominating and dominated roles - give them reversed responsibilities.
- ◆ Questionnaire - either verbally or written, or some method, obtain from individuals what they think they are good at or like to do most.
- ◆ Keep parents and adults up to date; let them have a copy of this; make the progress records available for all to read and encourage it.
- ◆ The young can get very carried away. The hypnotist's method of counting the subjects back to reality, or some other approach, is a good idea.
- ◆ Look out for children's fears' - a child, for example, may be terrified of having to climb into a very small imaginary box.
- ◆ If one of them does not wish to do something, inquire and explore out the problem in a sensitive way; never make the child act out what it has a phobia of.
- ◆ Parents watching will be a cause of embarrassment to the freedom of the child in their drama.

Date: 28.01.94

## Info

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