



~ IMPROV THEATER ~



Theater Games to help quickly create interesting characters, dialogue and story with whatever items you have available

Fun for the whole family, all ages!

WEEK 3

Reference: Drama Games for Kids, a Beat By Beat book



Emotion Party

Purpose: To explore emotions and be aware of surroundings.

Procedure:

1. Each player thinks of an emotion silently in their head.
2. One player (the host) starts in the center of the room, setting up for a party.
3. The host acts his emotion through his behavior and manner.
4. Another player knocks on the door and is let in by the host.
5. The new player must act in the manner of her own emotion.
6. The host, Player 1, now begins to act in the manner of Player 2's emotion (having guessed what that emotion is).
7. Player 3 knocks and enters with a different emotion.
8. Now Players 1 and 2 must independently identify Player 3's emotion and begin to act in the manner of that emotion.
9. Game continues until all of the players have entered the party.
10. Players then leave the party, one by one, in the order in which they came in and with the emotion they chose.
11. This continues until Player 1, the host, is all alone again, and is back behaving in the manner of his original emotion.

Notes:

- Try this activity first without any sounds, forcing the kids to think of how to demonstrate the emotion using only their bodies/expressions/actions.
- Consider adding speaking after doing it once without sound.
- Reflect on which way was most challenging, and why?
- Encourage the kids to always be aware of participating in believable activities with other members of the party.



Hitchhiker

Purpose: To work on quick decision making and creativity.

Props: 4 chairs

Procedure:

1. Place four chairs to represent four seats in a car. Four players start in the car. They are headed somewhere.
2. A “hitchhiker” stands up and puts her thumb out. The hitchhiker has a very strong characteristic, such as enormous sneezes, extremely old in age, annoyed business person, etc.
3. One of the passengers says “look, hitchhiker” and they pull over to pick the hitchhiker up.
4. The hitchhiker enters the front passenger seat and the other players rotate around clockwise. The driver gets out of the car and exits.
5. As soon as the hitchhiker enters the car, all the passengers and driver immediately take on the hitchhiker’s characteristics and to the extreme.
6. They continue dialogue until new hitchhiker shows up.
7. This round robin should move very quickly.

Note:

On the first day of a session, you can save the improvisation game for the last five or ten minutes to send them off with a bang.

Vocabulary:

Characteristic – a common feature that an individual does



The Expert

Purpose: To quickly come up with original material.

Procedure:

1. Players are each “experts” on a particular subject.
2. Players take turns.
3. The other players call out a subject that the chosen player is an expert in (i.e. cereal, hairstyling, fruit, Mexico, etc.)
4. The player must talk about that subject like an expert for one minute.
5. They should not stop talking and can say whatever comes to mind no matter how absurd. The only rule is they can never stop talking.

Notes:

- Consider adding some sort of prop to make it more fun. Perhaps some silly professor glasses, or a clipboard, etc.
- Consider asking them to take on different personalities as well.

Vocabulary:

Expert – very educated and knowledgeable on the subject they are speaking about

Material – ideas for creating a scene



Talk Show Expert

Purpose: To make quick and creative decisions

Props: 2 chairs

Procedure:

1. Two players sit on chairs in front of the other players.
2. One player is the “expert” and one is the talk show “host.”
3. The host’s job is to throw focus to the expert and the expert’s job is to take focus.
4. The host can make up the name of their show and a silly song to introduce it.
5. The host asks the other players for an object and an action. This is what the expert will be an expert at.
6. For example, The host introduces: “Welcome to the ____ Show! Today we’re here with Manuel, who’s an expert on teaching pigs how to do karate. Tell us more Manuel...”
7. Manuel has to go along with whatever the host has made up. (Remember, the expert knows everything and whatever they say, no matter how outrageous, it is always right.)
8. After the initial interview the host takes questions from the audience for the expert to answer. (This is a way for more players to participate, and kids who are shy get to shine for a moment as they work their way up to being experts or hosts.)

Vocabulary:

Audience - people watching the scene

Expert – very educated and knowledgeable on the subject they are speaking about



3 Television Channels

Purpose: To explore physical improvisation and creativity.

Procedure:

1. Three players stand facing the other players.
2. The other players come up with three television channels (telenovela, cartoon, sitcom, reality, etc).
3. One of the other players has the remote control and calls out a particular channel.
4. The players must perform a scene from that channel.
5. When a new channel is called, actors must immediately transition into a scene on the new channel.
6. When a channel that was previously called is called again, actors must go back to exact position and moment from where they left off.

Vocabulary:

Transition - change



Status Exercise

Purpose: To explore different behaviors and character choices.

Procedure:

1. Explain and explore the idea of “status”. We all have different status in different situations.
2. From now on describe it on a 1-10 scale: 10 being practically a god and 1 being the lowliest creature you can imagine.
3. What status are you? If a 10 walked in the room, would you talk to her? What about a 1?
4. When was a time in which you were a 10? In other words, when you had complete power and authority in a situation?
5. Have slips of paper each with a number from 1-10 written on it. Mix them up in a bowl or hat.
6. One at a time, players draw a number from a hat.
7. Without revealing their number, each player enters, stands, and exists as that number.
8. The other players try and guess the number based on the behavior of the entrance and exit for the player that is up.
9. Players can come up a few times until it becomes clear to the other players.
10. Have two players improvise a scene (you can give them a setting and conflict if needed). Assign one player a “high” status and the other a “low” status.
11. Halfway through, tell them to “switch” statuses. Make sure they don’t switch characters, but only who is in control of the situation, keeping their original characters.

Reflection:

- Explain that status is one more layer they can add to their characters.
- If you are rehearsing a play, ask them to think about each scene their character is in and what “status number” their character would be. What factors are influencing their level of status?



Vocabulary:

Character – a person in a play

Rehearsing – practicing

Status – someone’s social standing in the community

Switch – change places



Grab A Slip

Procedure: To be creative and make bold decisions and responsiveness.

Props: Slips of Paper

Procedure:

1. Create slips of paper with random phrases on them. (ie. “The goats left for dinner already”, “Never point at a pine tree”, “Please stop looking at my earlobe”, etc.)
2. Spread the slips of paper face down on the floor.
3. Ask two or three players to start an improvised scene.
4. During the improv at random intervals yell, “Grab a slip!” The player that was speaking must bend down in mid-sentence and grab a slip of paper, say the line, and somehow justify the line within the scene.

Note:

- Encourage all the actors to do the best they can to stay in character and allow the line to become part of the scene.

Other Random Phrases:

- “Dominoes aren’t meant to be left in the sun.”
- “Explain yourself, quickly!”
- “My mouth feels like wet velcro.”
- “Never underestimate the importance of clean underwear.”
- “One time I tried to jump over a peach tree.”
- “You look like a confused dinosaur.”
- “Let me brush that for you.”
- “Does my voice sound like a tiny robot?”
- “If only everyone could see me now!”
- “I think I’ll go to sleep on that squirrel.”



Vocabulary:

Character – a person in a play

Line – the actor's dialogue they say

Responsiveness – reacting quickly and positively



Gibberish Interpreter

Purpose: To be creative and make bold decisions.

Procedure:

1. Warm up with a simple call and response. Speak a phrase in gibberish, and have the other players repeat it. Try to use gestures and demonstrate different emotions and styles.
2. Then have one player speak gibberish and another player translates the gibberish into English.
3. Give the gibberish speaking player a specific situation to talk about or take suggestions from the other players. (i.e. You have just come back from a walk on Jupiter, and you are telling us, a crowd of reporters, all about it.)
4. The gibberish speaker should speak only one line at a time, using as much physicality as they can. Then the interpreter must mimic the motions and translate the phrase into English.

Note:

- Encourage the gibberish speaker to be very specific in their intention and actions. Encourage the interpreter to think very carefully about trying to make the gibberish make sense.

Other Scenarios:

- A scientist explaining their recent discovery of a second moon.
- A pop singer giving a press conference after falling asleep during their concert performance.
- A child describing what it was like getting their first cavity.
- A chief explaining how to cook their favorite meal, candy spaghetti (or anything else!)
- A farmer explaining how to milk a cow in record time.



Vocabulary:

Call and Response – One person says something and another person repeats it

Gestures - a form of non-verbal communication in which visible bodily actions communicate particular messages, either in place of speech or together and in parallel with spoken words. Gestures include movement of the hands, face, or other parts of the body.

Gibberish – “Talking gibberish” means mumbling or creating your own language, with sounds and words that you make up

Intention – what you want

Interpreter - a person who interprets, especially one who translates speech orally

Mimic – imitate someone’s voice, mannerisms, or movements



Gibberish Conversation

Purpose: To be creative and make bold decisions.

Procedure:

1. Two players will perform in the scene while two other players stand on either side of them. They are the interpreters.
2. Have the other players give the main players a topic.
3. The first player speaks a line in gibberish, then his interpreter will translate it into English for the audience.
4. The second player responds in gibberish, then their interpreter translates.

For example:

Topic: Laundry

Actor 1: Gil frelic neber seber trolli?

Interpreter 1: Is that pleasant smell coming from you?

Actor 2: Poy yoy, beek plotter woter magory.

Interpreter 2: Why yes, last night I washed my clothes in my dad's cologne.

Vocabulary:

Audience - people watching the scene

Gibberish - "Talking gibberish" means mumbling or creating your own language, with sounds and words that you make up.

Interpreter - a person who interprets, especially one who translates speech orally



Alphabet Conversation

Purpose: To make quick decisions and work as a team.

Procedure:

1. Two players start by picking a letter from the alphabet to start with.
2. They must exchange dialogue in which the first word they speak must begin with the next letter of the alphabet, starting with whichever letter is elected and finish at the letter just before.
3. The conversation should make sense and propel action in the scene.
4. It's optional to give the players a given situation or scene beforehand.

For example:

“Fishing in the middle of a lake”, starting letter is “D”.

Player 1: Do you want to add more bait to your hook?

Player 2: Eel or should I use squid?

Player 1: Forget eel, squid is the way to get the really big fish!

Player 2: Gonna give it a shot, here I go!

Player 1: Holy cow, nice cast!

Player 2: I've been practicing all summer...etc.

Vocabulary:

Dialogue - conversation between two or more people



Yes, Let's

Purpose: This game reinforces the basic principle of improv – accepting. Kids are often contrary in their choices when starting improv. Because it's easy and often gets a laugh from their friends. However being contrary, or blocking, is fatal to most improv activities.

Procedure:

1. Divide everyone into two groups.
2. Ask the first group to start by having one player say “Let's [.....]” and then an activity (i.e. “Let's go to the mall”, “Let's do our homework”, “Let's go surfing” etc.)
3. Then all the other players support the action by jumping in and saying “Yes! Let's!”
4. Everyone then proceeds to do the activity together until another person in the group introduces a new “Let's [activity]!”
5. Everyone else says “Yes! Let's!” and proceeds to do the activity. (Encourage the players to always be physically active.)
6. This pattern continues until everyone has had a chance to suggest an activity.
7. After the first group finishes, ask the second group to do the same.

Reflection:

- Was this activity difficult or hard?
- Did it make things easier/smooth knowing that you HAD to accept the activity?
- Did you feel more connected with your group by the end of the activity?
- How would this activity be different if you were allowed to “block” the suggestion?