

## **TEACUP Theatre Lesson Plan**

**Facilitation by:** Si Mon' Emmett

**Description:** The 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in this Performing Arts class will participate in a story drama activity centered around a refugee narrative that explores themes of loneliness, imagination, and personal journey. The students will explore these themes outside of the storybook by engaging in group activities involving spoken word poetry and tableaux.

**Subject Matter:** Refugee narratives, theatre and imagination, acting out moments from a story book, spoken word poetry (creative writing), and tableaux

**Rationale:** I am teaching this lesson to introduce a refugee narrative in a dramatic context. Students will also practice skills in creative writing, tableaux and team building.

**Materials Needed:** TEACUP book by Rebecca Young, strips of paper with words from the book printed or written on them, glass bottles (one per group of 3 students), teacup, numbered 1-3 pieces of paper

### **Objectives:**

- Students will know the definition of the drama term “tableaux” and the steps for creating a simple spoken word poem in a collaborative setting.
- Students will be able to synthesize spoken word pieces around a theme individually and/or in a group.
- Students will, through drama activities, explore the sensory experience of the refugee journey
- Essential Question: How can we relate to an experience, such as that of the young refugee, that we have never experienced ourselves?

### **TEKS Addressed:**

**5.1.A** The student develops concepts about self, human relationships, and the environment, using elements of drama and conventions of theatre

**5.1.D** The student is expected to: express emotions and relate ideas, using interpretive movement and dialogue

**5.1.E** The student is expected to: integrate life experiences in dramatic play

**5.1.F** The student is expected to: portray environment, characterization, and actions

**5.2.D** The student is expected to: dramatize literary selections in pairs and various groupings and create simple stories collaboratively in improvisations and story dramatizations, describing characters, their relationships, and their environments and demonstrating a logical connection of events

**5.3.d** The student is expected to: interact cooperatively with others in brief dramatizations

**5.5.C** The student is expected to: compare and contrast ideas and emotions depicted in theatre, dance, music and art and select and explain the use of movement, music or visual elements to enhance classroom dramatizations

**Preset:** students will file into the room and form a circle in the center

## **LESSON - Activities and Timeframe**

### **In Your Suitcase – Group Game (5-10 minutes)**

- *Ms. Emmett: Hello 5<sup>th</sup> grade! Please follow the person in front of you to find your spots in the space.* Students are guided into the circle.
- My name is Ms. Emmett, kind of like the character in the Lego movie! Now before we get started, if you will please find your imagination switch or nob, which ever you prefer, and turn your imagination on! (everyone must participate in this portion in some way)
- *Great! Now, as you can see I've been carrying this huge suitcase with me* (teacher signifies an imaginary suitcase in front of her) *and I want to share with you what I carry with me everywhere.*
- Teacher will mime picking opening the suitcase and pulling out a special object
- *This is my \_\_\_\_\_ it is important to me because \_\_\_\_\_. I would take this with me anywhere I had to go if it was the only thing I could take. Now, I'm going to pass it to you!* (teacher passes it to next student in the circle).
- *Please tell the class—and show us!--what would be in your suitcase.*
- Each student takes a turn to share their special object with the class until the suitcase gets back to the teacher.
- *Wow, thank you for sharing those with me. I feel like I know you all so much better after seeing what objects are special to you.*

**\*\*next activity is optional, will be cut out if “In Your Suitcase” activity runs long\*\***

### **Where Have My Fingers Been? - Intro Activity (5-10 min.)**

- Now, if you are comfortable doing so, we will all link arms in a circle and each participant holds up their two index fingers and dances along with the chant, “Where, have, my fingers been? I said, where have my fingers been? Say WHAT? Where, have, my fingers been? I said, where have my fingers been?”
- Whoever has been designated to start (usually the teacher) makes eye contact with someone else in the circle and gives them a setting. This can be general or specific to the lesson.
- Ex: the rainforest, the school library, Hungary, the White House in 1957, Lewis and Clark’s expedition, etc. The student chosen will then have ten seconds to have their finger act out a scene with the person who is linked to their left or right side. After ten

seconds, the teacher leads the group chant and the process to the next set of students and a new scene starts, taking place in a new environment. The student who just acted out a finger scene will choose the next participant to act out a scene.

**Transition:**

- Emmett: *Those were some great scenes! I'm so excited that all of you have such fantastic imaginations. That's perfect for our next activity.*

**Read the Book (10 min.)**

- Emmett: *In my other suitcase (signifying a real bag that carries materials) I have with me a book.*
- Teacher pulls out "TEACUP" by Rebecca Young.
- Emmett: *I know a lot of you are already reading chapter books by 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and you might not have picked up a book like this since you were a bit younger, but I want you to use your impeccable 5<sup>th</sup> grade observation skills and notice how a big story can be told with simple words. You'll need to pay attention to this because we're going to do a little something like this of our own later, so keep in mind the ways in which this story is told.*
- *This book is called TEACUP*
- Teacher reads TEACUP, asking questions throughout:
  - *What are some things you see in this image? (page 1-2)*
  - *Where do you think he is going?*
  - *Does anyone know what an albatross is? (if "yes") great! Can you show me how it might glide across the sky? (if "no") explain that it is a bird that lives near the sea (page 13-14)*
  - *Show me your best whale call! (page 15-16)*
  - *How do you think the boy is feeling at this point? What makes you think that?*
  - *What are things you might see in the clouds that remind you of home? (page 17-18)*

**Transition: Group Spoken word and Tableaus**

- Emmett: *Well that was a very abrupt ending! I'd love to see what might happen next, wouldn't you? I think we should create our own endings!*

**Tableau Activity (15 min.)**

**PART I**

- Emmett: *Please come pick a number from this teacup (teacher signifies teacup in the classroom) and find two people—creating a group of three—who have the same number as you.*

- Now we are going to create what is called a **tableaux** does anyone know what that means? (if “yes”) great, that’s exactly right! (if “no”) explain that it is simply a frozen moment or image
- With your group, work together to create a tableaux about the following prompt:
- Teacher writes on the board:
  - **What it feels like to have to move away from your home**
- Students take 2-3 minutes to create and another 2-3 minutes to share with class

## PART II

- Emmett: *Those were great! You’re all so good at tableaux! Are you sure you’re not tableaux professionals?!! Okay, now let’s try adding on something new since you’re so good at these.*
- Teacher hands out to each group a glass bottle with pieces of paper in them.
- Each bottle will have slips of paper with various words from the book on it that can make up a sentence. Those can include:
  - Leave, to, find, without, a, maybe, sometimes, we, together, found, hope,
  - Go, to, where, arrived, finally, found, around, searched, me, someone
  - Waited, found, why, on, wondered, and, then, surprise, I, arrived, you
- Emmett: *This is your Poem in a Bottle. With the words in the bottle, create a simple sentence—like one of the ones in the TEACUP book—describing a journey similar to the boy’s in the story. This sentence will be spoken aloud later and should be spoken in a way that uses rhythm (or “word play”) and tone. Perhaps provide example from the book. This will make up what is called a **spoken word poem** when we share them. It has to be about the following prompt (write prompt on board):*
  - **What happens when you find someone after being lonely**
- Lay the poem on the ground in front of you, when you are done create a tableaux based on your poem and either have one member of the group read the poem for which two actors make the frozen image OR everyone make the tableaux and each person says a part of the poem.
- After 3-5 minutes, share with the class.

## Closing (5 min.):

- Emmett: *Wow those poems and tableaux were so beautiful!*
- *Though they reflected the journey this particular character took, they also reflect the journey of many people in the world who have to flee their homes...”and find another” as the book says. Does anyone know what that is called? That is called finding refuge, or a different, more safe place to live. These people are called **refugees**.*
  - What did you notice about the images (or tableaux) that reflected these refugee journeys? What made you think that?

- How do you think they feel when leaving home? Traveling? Finding a new home?
- How did you feel when recreating these images?
- Emmett: *These were great answers. You're all so smart! Thank you for going on this journey with me today. Make sure to pick up your poems and place them back in the bottle and I'll see if I can send them to the boy so he can read them too! I'm sure he would enjoy them!*
- *I'm now looking for students who are sitting quietly and ready for next instructions. You may grab your suitcase from earlier—hold on tight to it!!—and get into the line (for departure from the class). OR turn your attention back to Mrs. Sullivan.*

**Extension Activity/Homework (if any):**

Not Applicable

**Contingencies:**

- If the lesson runs too long, cut the “Where have my fingers been activity” and the sharing from **PART I** of the tableaux activity
- If the lesson is too short, create another tableaux around the scenario of “what happens next” when the boy finds a friend.