

PETER AND THE STAR CATCHER

A Prequel to Peter Pan

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Ahmanson Theatre



UCLA



Welcome

Educator Resources

Peter and the Starcatcher

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Center Theatre Group is excited to have you and your students join us at *Peter and the Starcatcher* by Rick Elice, based on the best-selling books by Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson.

A great play raises questions about the human condition and a great educational experience allows students an opportunity to reflect upon those questions and begin to discover their own answers. To that end the material in Center Theatre Group's Discovery Guide and Educator Resources raises questions — questions about growing up, questions about magic, questions about what makes a leader, questions about friendship and finding a home. Our goal is to provide you with a variety of entry points into *Peter and the Starcatcher* so that you can choose what best suits you and your students.

The Educator Resources and Discovery Guide are companion pieces, designed to help you prepare your students to see the play and to follow-up the performance with options for discussion, reflection and creativity.

We have organized the Educator Resources into the following sections:

Discovery Guide

The Discovery Guide provides students with background information about the play and the subject matter, as well as questions for individual reflection. Written to be student-driven, the Discovery Guide helps prepare your students for the performance.

Comprehension

This section includes background information about the setting and subject matter of the play. We have selected the information that most directly connects to or informs what happens in the play.

This section furthers and deepens the background information provided in the Discovery Guide. This section can be shared before the play and/or discussed after the performance. It can also be used to provide research topics for your classroom.

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that both examine specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

We know the hard work and dedication that it takes to bring students to see theatre. These materials are designed to support you in making the most of that experience. We applaud your passion for sharing theatre with your students and thank you for sharing your students with all of us at Center Theatre Group. We look forward to seeing you at *Peter and the Starcatcher*!



L.A.'s Theatre Company

Ahmanson Theatre
Mark Taper Forum
Kirk Douglas Theatre

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Comprehension

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Upcycling and Recycling

Donyale Werle, the set designer for *Peter and the Starcatcher*, incorporated discarded items into the show's set pieces. The show's costume designer, Paloma Young, utilized found objects for the mermaid costumes. Both of these designers participated in a process called "upcycling."

Upcycling is not the same as recycling.

When an item is recycled, it is broken down into its baser element (plastic, metal, glass, paper, etc.) and is remade into a new item, usually of lesser quality.

When a discarded item is upcycled, it is transformed into something useful and/or beautiful. And it usually retains most of its original form.

Upcycling is not a new trend. In the 1930s and 40s – during the Great Depression and World War II – families had very few resources, therefore it was necessary for them to reuse almost everything until it could not be used again. Feed sacks were transformed into dresses. An old door became the family's new dining table.

"What is old is new again, but with a twist."

Besides helping families save money, the process of upcycling has many other benefits:

- Upcycling is green. It has a positive effect on the environment. When we upcycle, we lessen the garbage stream. Also, upcycling can be more environmentally friendly than recycling because you do not use energy or water to break the items down into their base components.
- Many enjoy the artistic aesthetic that is created as a result of upcycling.
- In developing countries, upcycling is a way for many people to wisely utilize the resources that they have. Baskets, blankets, jewelry and other beautiful and useful items are created out of objects that are already present in their lives.

¹ <http://hipcycle.com/what-is-upcycling>

Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

We can upcycle almost anything, as the designers of *Peter and the Starcatcher* have demonstrated. Below is a list of items that have been upcycled for use in the sets and costumes of the show:

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Aluminum Can Lids: 56 | Cooking Tools: 54 | Paper Tubes: 8 |
| Balls: 11 | Cords: 32 | Pencils: 48 |
| Bamboo Sticks: 162 | Corks: 3,563 | Q-Tips: 53 |
| Black Acoustic Tiles: 33 | Doilies: 49 | Rope Nets: 1 |
| Bottle Caps: 817 | Forks, Spoons, Knives: 312 | Single Beads: 133 |
| CDs: 97 | Lined Beads: 93 | Thick Rope Pieces: 67 |
| Chains: 11 | Mannequin Arms: 4 | Thin Rope Pieces: 137 |
| Coffee Lids: 51 | Mini Corks: 86 | Toys: 120 |
| Cooking Timers: 24 | Moldings: 15 | Zippers: 57 |

Page 154: Elice, Rick (2012). *Peter and the Starcatcher: The Annotated Script of the Broadway Play*. New York: Disney Editions.

If you'd like to start an upcycling project with your students, the Imagination Foundation (the Caine's Arcade official website) offers details about its "Cardboard Challenge," an invitation to be creative with discarded cardboard boxes: <http://cardboardchallenge.com/#create-event>.

Caine's Arcade was created by 9-year-old Caine Monroy of Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles. In the front of his father's automotive parts shop, he created an elaborate arcade made of cardboard boxes. Caine's first customer was filmmaker Nirvan Mullick, who visited the shop looking for a door handle for his '96 Corolla. Mullick was so enchanted by the arcade, he made a short film about it. Once the film was posted online, it became a global sensation.

For more information about the story of Caine's Arcade and the resourcefulness and creativity it inspires, go to: <http://www.imagination.is/about>

The British Empire and Queen Victoria: Britain in 1885

Peter and the Starcatcher is set in the year 1885, a moment when Great Britain's longest-reigning monarch, Queen Victoria, was head of state. She ruled over a vast empire, and oversaw huge changes in British society. The period of her reign, 1837-1901, is referred to as the Victorian Era.

During this time, Great Britain became the world's major superpower and acquired the largest empire the modern world had ever witnessed. It covered approximately one-fifth of the earth's surface and "almost a quarter of the world's population at least theoretically owed allegiance to the 'queen empress.'"²

In a constitutional monarchy such as Great Britain, the monarch is more of a symbol, while the Parliament is the supreme lawmaking body. At home in England, Queen Victoria did not have much real power, but she was put in charge of Great Britain's colonies. She had been made empress of India, and other parts of her empire included Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and much of Africa. Great Britain also held sway over Burma (now Myanmar) and its capital, Rangoon (which sounds very much like Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson's fictional Rundoon in the *Peter and the Starcatchers* book series).

God Save the Queen!

During *Peter and the Starcatcher*, you will often hear Molly and her father, Lord Aster, say, "God save Her" when Queen Victoria's name is mentioned. This phrase is used as an expression of personal loyalty to the Queen. In Great Britain, the gender used in the phrase depends upon whether the reigning monarch is a king or a queen.

The origin of this phrase goes back to the Old Testament, where "God save the King" is used in various sections of the King James Bible. Every British coronation since King Edgar's in 973 has used text based on this source.³

As early as 1545 the phrase was used as a watchword (or password) in the British navy, with "long to reign over us" used as its countersign. (A countersign is "a signal or password given in reply to a soldier on guard.")⁴

² http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/victorians/overview_victorians_01.shtml

³ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen

⁴ <http://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=watchword&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#q=watchword+meaning&revid=615359598&rls=en>

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Eventually the phrase “God Save the King” was incorporated into a popular British song of the same title. According to the official website of the British Monarchy, the words and tune are anonymous. It was first performed in 1745 after a play at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Upon receiving news of a British battle victory, the bandleader played the piece “in a fit of Patriotic fervour.” The song was well received and, afterward, was repeated nightly.⁵

Also in 1745, the song appeared in *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, which published “God save our lord the king: A new song set for two voices.” This article described it as being sung “at both Playhouses” (the Theatres Royal at Drury Lane and Covent Garden).⁶

It became Britain’s unofficial national anthem at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The tune has also been used in many other countries. Approximately 140 composers, including Beethoven, Haydn and Brahms, have used the music in their compositions.⁷

Students in the United States may recognize the song’s melody; it is the same as the popular American patriotic song, “My Country ’tis of Thee.”

The original lyrics from 1745 are still used in Britain today. Usually only the first verse is sung. The words are as follows:

God save our gracious Queen!
Long live our noble Queen!
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.

Thy choicest gifts in store
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign.
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen.

www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/victoria_queen.shtml (9/2/13)

⁵ <http://www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchUK/Symbols/NationalAnthem.aspx>

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen

⁷ <http://www.royal.gov.uk/MonarchUK/Symbols/NationalAnthem.aspx>

Collaboration

Merriam Webster defines “collaborate” as “to work jointly with others, especially in an intellectual endeavor.” Its origin is from the Latin word “collaboratus,” to labor together. *Peter and the Starcatcher* is a celebration of collaboration. The entire production is infused with it, from the themes of the story, to the dynamic ensemble work onstage, to the creative process that brought this show to life.

The story was born of collaboration between two writers, Dave Barry and Ridley Pearson. Telecommuting between Miami, Florida and St. Louis, Missouri, they found a way to write a novel together, resulting in *Peter and the Starcatchers* being published in 2004. Since that time they have expanded their work into a series of novels that elaborates on the lives of Peter and his fellow Lost Boys.

The collaborative process continued in New York as *Peter and the Starcatcher* evolved into a play with music. In March of 2007, the trio of Roger Rees, Alex Timbers, and Ken Cerniglia began to transform the novel into a theatrical piece, working in a cramped conference room at 1450 Broadway. Their first presentation of scenes took place later that year in Williamstown, Massachusetts. Discoveries were made here that are still in the show, such as using rope to create everything from doorways to water. The work was well received. They were inspired to move forward.

From there, it was back to New York City, where the creative team grew. Rick Elice (who eventually became the official playwright) was brought on board. In the fall of 2007, pieces of Act One were performed in a church attic. Collaboration continued in the small quarters of 1450 Broadway. Wayne Brady, the composer, was folded into the mix.

Looking for a home in which to stage a workshop production, the creative team found it in La Jolla Playhouse’s Page To Stage program. This meant a move to Southern California, where work commenced in January of 2009. The ever-expanding collaborative crew now included Neil Patel (set designer), Paloma Young (costume designer), Jeff Croiter (lighting designer), Marco Pagnia (musical director), and Kelly Devine (choreographer). There were sixteen actors in the show, six of whom later went to Broadway with the production. In La Jolla the show had a successful run, enjoyed by young and old alike, but its future was still uncertain.

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Back in New York once again, Rick Elice dove into rewrites. Sculptor and set designer Donyale Werle was engaged to add a more dynamic visual element. She was known for incorporating found objects and discarded materials into her designs, with great effect. Elice's revised version of the play had a staged reading at the New York Theater Workshop (NYTW) during the summer of 2010.

NYTW produced a run of the show that lasted from February until April of 2011. For this chapter of *Peter and the Starcatcher*, Steven Hoggett was engaged as the choreographer as was sound designer Darron West. The number of actors was reduced from sixteen to twelve. The production played to sold-out houses night after night.

Peter and the Starcatcher finally made it to Broadway. It opened at the Brooks Atkinson Theatre on April 15, 2012. It went on to receive nine Tony Award nominations and win five Tony Awards. In all, it took five years and the collaboration of many creative minds to bring to life this “love letter to the theater.”

The play has now begun its national tour of the United States. It will visit the following cities between August 2013 and May 2014:

Denver, CO; Dallas, TX; Houston, TX; San Antonio, TX; Seattle, WA; San Francisco, CA; Los Angeles, CA; Tempe, AZ; East Lansing, MI; Washington, D.C.; Hartford, CT; Providence, RI; Utica, NY; St. Louis, MO; Minneapolis, MN; Folsom, CA; Palm Desert, CA; Chicago, IL; Charlotte, NC; Baltimore, MD; Pittsburgh, PA.

J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan*

J.M. Barrie's original story, the play *Peter Pan*, has a rich history in our culture. It first appeared as a play in 1904. Barrie was inspired to write the story because of his connection to five young boys of the Llewelyn Davies family. The name for the character Peter is said to have been inspired by Peter Llewelyn Davies. Peter Pan's adventures were based on the playful, improvised storytelling that Barrie engaged in with the Llewelyn boys.

Also, earlier in Barrie's life, his older brother died in a skating accident soon before his fourteenth birthday. Some historians have speculated that the character of "the boy who never grows up" is based on the brother whom Barrie had lost many years before.

Many variations of *Peter Pan* have been created in a variety of genres, including novels, films, television specials, and musicals. They have entertained and inspired us over many decades.

Another legacy of the story is that J.M. Barrie arranged in his will for all royalties earned from *Peter Pan* to go to the Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children in the Bloomsbury area of London. In this way, a story about young people taking care of each other has gone on to take care of countless sick children through the years.

Connections and Creativity

This section provides ways to explore connections between the ideas presented in the play, the students' lives, and the world we live in. In addition, it provides opportunities for your students to use theatre to explore and express. Theatre activities are included that both examine specific artistic aspects of the production, as well as delve deeper into the ideas and questions raised by the production. The questions, activities and information in this section can be used both before and after the performance.

Cultural Mapping

Objectives

- Students will gain knowledge of similarities and differences in their classmates.
- Students will be introduced to *Peter and the Starcatcher* and begin to reflect on the play.

Exercise

Ask the students to move the desks to the side and stand in a circle.

Describe the room as a map of the world. Identify Los Angeles in the space.

Have students who were born in Los Angeles gather in that place.

Have the other students group themselves according to their birthplace (north, east, south or west of Los Angeles).

Each group must determine two additional things that they have in common. (Example: The members of the “north” group all like pizza and are the oldest in their families.)

Report back to the whole class.

Repeat activity using other divisions: oldest, middle, youngest, only child; speak one language, two languages etc.

Quotes

“Two trunks, deliberately similar to each other in their...trunkness.”

“It’s a better team with you on it.”

“The thing we did.... against impossible odds.”

“Forget gold! Time, *Time*’ll be our treasure. We’ll fight for all eternity!”

“I’m giving you one, it’s a gift. Least I can do.”

“This is gonna be one awfully big adventure.”

Ask each student to stand by the quote that most intrigues them.

Discuss in the group why they chose that quote. What intrigues them about it?

Tableau/Frozen Picture

Objectives

- Students will practice using their bodies to communicate an idea or theme.
- Students will reflect on the varied interpretations of the theme.
- Students will reflect on *Peter and the Starcatcher* through a physical exploration of its themes.

Exercise

Divide students into pairs. Student A is the artist. Student B is the sculpture.

Have student A create a statue out of B on the theme of the “future.”

Examples: Flying cars, world peace, destroying the environment, graduating from college. Statues can be realistic or symbolic, personal or global.

Have each student title their statue and present to the class.

Repeat exercise with B as the artist and A as the sculpture.

Repeat with any of the following show-specific themes:

Flying, Growing Up, Starstuff, Heroes/Villains, Home, Leadership.

Have each student sculpt an image that represents one of these themes.

Discuss what these ideas mean to your students and what these ideas meant in *Peter and the Starcatcher*. Are they similar or very different?

Superhero/Mortal Enemy

Objectives

- Students will physically explore heroes and villains.
- Students will reflect on the themes of heroes and villains in *Peter and The Starcatcher*.

Have the students move through the room. Ask them to secretly identify a classmate as a “Mortal Enemy” whom they must avoid at all costs. (This activity is done without words and they will not have to share who they selected.)

Stress that this game is bigger than ordinary life, more like a superhero movie or cartoon. Imagine that your Mortal Enemy (Captain Hook) has the ability to make you walk the plank if you get too close. Have the students move through the space trying to stay as far away from their “Mortal Enemy” as possible.

Next, they secretly identify a “Superhero” (Peter Pan) whom they must keep between themselves and their enemy at all times. This person has super powers and can protect them from anything bad by flying in and rescuing them. Students continue to move through the space, keeping their Superhero between them and their Mortal Enemy at all times.

Let the game speed up as fast as feels safe to you.

FREEZE!

Tell them that now the roles are switched — your Superhero is now the enemy and your Mortal Enemy is now your hero.

GO!

Discuss.

What was it like to have a Superhero and Mortal Enemy? Did you think you were someone’s Superhero? How did you know?

Connect to the story of Peter Pan and to *Peter and The Starcatcher*. In the Discovery Guide, in the Heroes and Villains section, Black Stache’s theory that every hero needs a villain is explained. Discuss the theory. Do you agree?

Prop Transformation: This is Not a Stick

Objectives

- Students will practice using a physical object in a way other than its usual function.
- Students will reflect on the use of prop transformation to help tell a story in *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Supplies

A broom handle or long ruler

A frisbee

A water bottle

Rope

Stand in a circle.

Present an ordinary object to the group, saying “this is not a [stick]” and then using the object in a new way to demonstrate what else it could be. As the object is passed around the circle ask each student to show, rather than tell, the group what they are imagining.

For example, a ruler could become a sword, an oar, a baseball bat, a paintbrush. A frisbee could become a steering wheel, a mirror, a beret.

Stress that there is no wrong answer, and that if they get stuck, the group will make suggestions to help. Do several rounds using different objects.

Discuss.

Share that the actors in *Peter and the Starcatcher* will be transforming ordinary objects to help tell the story. Ask the students to reflect on this theatrical choice.

How does it help tell the story? Would you rather they used real objects (for example, an actual doorway rather than a rope doorway)?

What is the fun of telling a story this way?

Add-On Storytelling

Objectives

- Students will create a story collaboratively.
- Students will practice listening and contributing to the group.
- Students will reflect on the use of choral storytelling in *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Stand in a circle.

Explain that the class is going to create a group story, one word at a time. Start with “Once upon a time” and then have the class listen and add in their word when it is their turn.

Share that the story may be goofy and that this is fine! Let them know that the important thing is listening to one another and keeping the story moving forward.

Let the story go around the circle until it reaches a natural ending place.

One-sentence Storytelling

Once the group is comfortable with creating a one-word story, have them create a new story by adding one sentence at a time. The person telling the story can stop at any time, so each student needs to be ready to continue the story.

Remind the class to add on to the story being created rather than take the story in a completely different direction.

Again let the story come to a natural stopping place.

You can also do a written version of this activity.

Write an opening sentence on a legal pad. Pass the paper around the room, asking each student to read what is already written and then add on to the story.

Once the story is completed, read to the class.

Conducted Storytelling

This variation is fun and a little more challenging.

Have 5-8 students stand in a row. The instructor is the conductor for the first round.

Explain that whoever you're pointing to will tell the story until you point at someone else, who will continue the story exactly where it broke off (even in the middle of a word)!

Begin by asking the rest of the class for the title of a story that has never been told. As you point your finger at students, you can start to speed up. End the story on a high point by calling out "the end!"

Repeat several times, using a student conductor.

Discuss.

What was it like to tell a story collectively?

Was it harder or easier than creating a story on your own?

As you watch *Peter and the Starcatcher*, notice how the ensemble works together to tell the story.

Bringing Literature to Life

Objectives

- Students will take a piece of literature and bring the story to life physically.
- Students will use their bodies and imaginations to communicate.
- Students will reflect on the difference between showing and telling.
- Students will reflect on the use of physical storytelling in *Peter and the Starcatcher*.

Using a book or story that your class is working on, divide the students into groups of 4 to 5, giving each a different section of the story.

Ask them to create a tableau or series of tableaux to communicate the important moments in their section.

Stress that everyone must be in each picture, but that not everyone needs to be a person. Students can use their bodies to create a doorway or the ocean or any other part of the story.

Have the groups create their three tableaux and practice transitioning from picture to picture. Once the entire class is ready, share the tableaux in sequence to tell the story.

Back in their smaller groups, ask them to add found objects from the classroom to their tableaux. The students should transform the objects to help tell the story. Share.

If time permits, do a third round, having the students add sound/dialogue to their tableaux. Share.

Discuss.

What was it like to communicate without words?

As you watch *Peter and the Starcatcher*, notice how the actors use physicality and body language to communicate the story.

The Greatness I See in You

In *Peter and the Starcatcher*, The Boy/Peter and the other orphans receive a great deal of nurturing from Molly. She makes sure they are well fed and gives them the gift of story. At one point, she offers The Boy/Peter positive reflection about his courage by saying, “Bravo, Peter,” to him right before they race to the top of the mountain in Act Two.

Rarely do we make the opportunities to communicate to each other in such a direct and positive way. The exercise below offers opportunities for us to give that kind of support to each other, and to receive it.

(This exercise works best in small groups of 10 or 12, with an adult leading each group. However, if there is a certain amount of trust and connection among group members, the numbers in the group should not be of great concern.)

- The group sits in a circle.
- The spotlight is on one student at a time.
- Focusing on that student, each person in the circle finishes the phrase, “The greatness I see in you is...”
- Before starting, the leader of the group will model how to finish the phrase. For example, he/she might turn to the student on his/her left or right and say, “Jeff, the greatness I see in you is your sense of humor.”
- Students cannot say anything more than finishing that sentence.
- The only response from the person receiving the phrase can be a simple gesture that the group decides upon, or a nod of the head.

The responses will be chronicled as the comments are made:

- One person in the circle is designated as the recorder. (Students may also take turns being the recorder.)
- He/she is given pieces of cardstock and markers.
- The recorder uses one piece of cardstock for each individual, and writes down each comment that is said about the focus individual.
- Once all comments are written on the cardstock, it is given to the individual as a memento, so that they can remember all of the positive reflections that were offered to them that day.

Imagination! Training to Imagine in Teams

“Your imagination controls your destiny...”

— Donyale Werle, set designer for *Peter and the Starcatcher*

If our imagination controls our destiny, then, let’s train our brains, our hearts and spirits to imagine!

Molly: *[My name is] Molly Aster. Dr Pretorius back home says I have an extraordinarily high level of brain power.*

— *Peter and the Starcatcher*

In the show, the character Molly has a fantastic imagination. Her limitless creativity supports her inspired leadership and inventive problem solving. She exudes tremendous hope, and her unwavering faith in Peter and the other boy characters moves them to develop their leadership abilities as well.

Our brains can be trained to open up new pathways to increase our imagination, our creativity. *Peter and the Starcatcher* models this for us when we witness how the actors tell the story and how the characters team up throughout their adventure.

Playing in teams multiplies our discoveries for working creatively and intelligently. For example, in the show, the actors work together to create the impression of being onboard a ship. Because of the actors’ commitment to collaboration, the audience experiences the cramped spaces, dim light, and small doorways of the ship as they rock back and forth to give us all the sense of sailing over the high seas. There is even a stage direction in the script that shows how the actors found an effective way to best support changing characters and moving the story forward.

“MOLLY and MRS. BUMBRAKE help ASTER into his coat. The MEN become MERCHANT SAILORS, ordered about by SLANK.”

— *Peter and the Starcatcher* (stage direction)

Creating in teams can also be a way to practice dealing with the hardest challenges in our lives with support and fun!

Comprehension | Connections & Creativity

Activity: Part 1

Paired Drawing:

Overview:

In pairs, students take turns drawing and together create an image. They alternate drawing one line or feature at a time. Then they do the same, taking turns to title their drawing one letter at a time. This is a non-verbal activity. This drawing will be used in Parts 2 through 4.

Skills Practiced: Spontaneity, accepting offers from collaborators, team building, creativity, communication.

Supplies needed: Colored pens, if possible, or pen and/or pencil will do as well. Paper or flip chart.

Time: 7-10 minutes

- Distribute pens and paper. Explain that the task will be for each pair to draw an image together.
- They take turns and alternate drawing one line or feature at a time. They do not need to know the image ahead of time. The image will be discovered one line or feature at a time. The image is truly co-created by the pair.
- Then the pair will title the drawing by taking turns and alternating writing/adding a letter until they arrive at a title.
- Display the drawing.

Activity: Part 2

Picture Poetry

Overview: With your same partner, describe your drawing.

Skills Practiced: Spontaneity, accepting offers from your collaborator, listening and awareness, storytelling, team building, creativity, communication, writing.

Supplies: A piece of blank paper and colored pens for each pair.

- Instruct the pairs to imagine that they are viewing their drawing in a gallery.
- Have the first student offer a sentence describing the drawing or how the drawing makes them feel. After speaking their line, they write it down on the blank paper.
- Have the second student offer a second sentence doing the same. After speaking their line, the second student writes it down on the same sheet of paper, adding to the first line.
- The first student takes another turn and so forth. After speaking their line, they write it down, continuing to build the poem.
- Continue for a few more minutes writing each line down, until the poem seems complete.

Share the poems and drawings one pair at a time with the class and solicit positive feedback from the other pairs as they see and hear the poems.

Example: Pair drew a picture of a tiger.

First: I like the tiger's stripes. (Speaks it then writes it down.)

Second: The tiger leaps to the sky. (Speaks it then writes it down.)

First: And sees the whole world he jumps so high. (Speaks it then writes it down.)

Second: We can all be tigers when we want to be. (Speaks it then writes it down.)

Continue for a few more lines each in this fashion.

Possible questions for a feedback sessions:

What did you like about the poem?

What do you like about the drawing?

When you saw the drawing and heard the poem, what did you think of or imagine?

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What did you hear and see that you haven't heard or seen before? (Emphasize what can be discovered that is new for each student.)

Activity: Part 3

One-Word-at-a-Time Storytelling

Overview: Now all of the students display their drawings and create a story together, taking turns and contributing to the story one word at a time.

Skills Practiced: Spontaneity, accepting offers from collaborators, listening and awareness, storytelling, energy building, team building, creativity, communication.

Audio record the story to use it in the next activity.

- Have students stand in a circle. They arrange their drawings from Activity: Part 1 in the center of the circle. They all breathe and look at the drawings.
- Have the storytellers warm up by looking at that drawings and “popcorning” (spontaneously voicing single words that express what they are seeing and feeling, inspired by the drawings). Popcorning begins to build the concepts of cooperative listening and expressing with each other. The goal is to see if these popcorn ideas can work their way into the story.
- Someone volunteers or one person is appointed to start the story. Inspired by the drawings and popcorning, the first student starts the storytelling with one word. Each successive person contributes the next word.

Variations:

- Tell the story two words at a time.
- Tell the story with each person adding one word the first time around the circle, then two words, then three, in successive passes around the circle. Then go back down: three words, two, and finally back to one word at a time, ending the story when it is the last person's turn to say one word.

Tips:

Remind the students there is no such thing as a small word; “a” and “the” are as necessary to the sense of the sentence as a noun or verb.

Encourage strength and expressiveness in their voices to convey meaning.

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Encourage eye contact and encourage speed.
And of course, there is no right or wrong, all offers are accepted.

Activity: Part 4

On Our Feet with Found Objects

Overview: As a larger class project, utilize the recording of the story the students co-created and then have them begin to invent the story on their feet. The students can create as the recording is playing or simply use the recording as a reference to remember the story they created.

A wonderful warm-up for this activity is the “This is Not a Stick” activity (page 14). This will support students in using their imaginations when playing with the various found objects they will contribute to this activity; they can create so much more when they are able to use a stick as perhaps a broom or a flute or a hat.

Much as in *Peter and the Starcatcher*, the students can use found objects to be inventive with creating a sense of place, time and character.

- Have students pair up. Then have each pair bring two found objects to the circle from the classroom, from the playground, or even their homes.
- Organize the students into two pairs (4-player small groups) and give them each a section of the story that they will be responsible for inventing and sharing.
- Divide the found objects up among the groups. Each group must find a way to utilize these objects in their storytelling. Remind them that the objects can take on new meanings, new names, new purposes, etc.
- Display the drawings in a prominent place for continued inspiration or utilization in the storytelling.
- Give the groups 15 minutes to create their portion of the story. When time is up, have each group share/perform their portion of the story, continuing in sequence.
- Play each segment again, this time non-stop so that everyone can experience the telling of the whole story.
- You may need to allow a few minutes to create transitions between the groups and their segments of the story before retelling the entire story non-stop.

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Have fun! Enjoy the adventure!

Discussion/Follow-up Questions:

What was it like telling the story? How did you feel?

What parts were fun? Were you ever frustrated?

Did you ever hold back or feel shy? Why?

What would happen if we did this every day for a year?

Can we use this kind of teamwork for other things?

How is it going to help us in the future?

Sources:

Viola Spolin, Keith Johnstone, Chicago Schools, Theatresports, and Kat Koppett.

God Save the Queen

Most students in the United States are familiar with the melody of “My Country, 'Tis of Thee” by Samuel Francis Smith.

Have students sing this tune with its American lyrics:

My country, 'tis of thee,
Sweet land of liberty,
Of thee I sing;
Land where my fathers died,
Land of the pilgrims' pride,
From ev'ry mountainside
Let freedom ring!

My native country, thee,
Land of the noble free,
Thy name I love;
I love thy rocks and rills,
Thy woods and templed hills;
My heart with rapture thrills,
Like that above.⁸

Now, have students sing a stanza or two of the standard version of “God Save the Queen”:

God save our gracious Queen,
Live long our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the Queen.

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall:
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On Thee our hopes we fix:
God save us all.

⁸ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/My_Country,_%27Tis_of_Thee

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Thy choicest gifts in store
On her be pleased to pour,
Long may she reign;
May she defend our laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the Queen!⁹

Many other lyrics have been added to this melody. Have them sing the official British Peace version, a less militaristic version of “God Save the Queen,” written in 1919:

God save our gracious Queen
Long live our noble Queen
God save the Queen!
Send her victorious
Happy and glorious
Long to reign over us
God save the Queen!

One realm of races four
Blest more and ever more
God save our land!
Home of the brave and free
Set in the silver sea
True nurse of chivalry
God save our land!

Of many a race and birth
From utmost ends of earth
God save us all!
Bid strife and hatred cease
Bid hope and joy increase
Spread universal peace
God save us all!¹⁰

⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen#Lyrics_in_Britain
¹⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen#Lyrics_in_Britain

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Or the Canadian version (which has been translated into English from French):

Our loved Dominion bless
With peace and happiness
From shore to shore;
And let our Empire be
United, loyal, free,
True to herself and Thee
For evermore.¹¹

This exercise can be augmented by:

- Conducting an online search to discover the many countries and composers that have utilized this tune. Share this information with your students.
- Comparing and contrasting the above versions. Look at lyrics, tone, purpose, etc.

Now that your students have experienced a few different versions of this song, have them create their own lyrics that honor someone, some group, or something that is meaningful to them. They can create songs about a sports team, or their school, or their families—anyone or any group they feel inspired to praise. Give them full creative freedom. Their versions can be silly or serious. Have them create in small groups and sing their new songs for their fellow classmates.

¹¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/God_Save_the_Queen#Lyrics_in_Britain

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Credits

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Center Theatre Group's mission is to serve the diverse audiences of Los Angeles by producing and presenting theatre of the highest caliber, by nurturing new artists, by attracting new audiences, and by developing youth outreach and education programs. This mission is based on the belief that the art of theatre is a cultural force with the capacity to transform the lives of individuals and society at large.

Education and Engagement

Theatre is an enduring and powerful tool for communicating ideas, stories, emotions and beliefs that fuel the intellect, imagination and creative spirit.

Center Theatre Group believes that stimulating awareness, creativity, dialogue and an inquisitive mind is integral to the growth and well-being of the individual and the community; and that nurturing a life-long appreciation of the arts leads inextricably to an engaged and enlightened society. Center Theatre Group's education and engagement programs advance the organization's mission in three key ways:

Audiences: Inspiring current and future audiences to discover theatre and its connection to their lives

Artists: Investing in the training, support and development of emerging, young artists and young arts professionals who are the future of our field; and

Leadership: Contributing to the community-wide efforts to improve the quality and scope of arts education in Los Angeles.

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