

a beat**by**beat book

Over
70 Fun
Activities!

Teaching Drama (to little ones)

**12 Ready-to-Go Lesson Plans
for Kids Age 3-7**



Jessica McCuiston

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All lesson plans are designed for a 45-60 minute session for kids age 3-7. The lessons build upon each other and are intended to be followed in order but mixing and matching activities to best suit your students' abilities is absolutely encouraged.

Introduction

The goal of this book is to empower directors and teachers with specific tools and useful lesson plans to help teach a successful theatre program and create a memorable show when working with a group of little ones (kids age 3-7).

When I first started directing children's theatre, I found it especially challenging to teach preschoolers and kindergarteners. Existing drama activities were geared toward older performers. The songs were too difficult and scripts were way too long. So I started adapting games, editing songs, and writing my own scripts. I wanted my younger students to practice valuable theatre skills, learn to be responsible actors, and perform a real show with lines and solos. This book is filled with activities that are ideal for working with 3 to 7-year-olds. It also comes with guidelines for creating a show and even includes an optional script that you can use with your own students!

Some activities will work really well with one group of students and not so well with others. Don't be discouraged. Teaching theatre to 3 to 7-year-olds can be challenging and each group is unique. Slowly and clearly explain each new activity and then guide them through it. Don't get frustrated or feel like a failure if they don't get it. Just switch to something else and try again another day. You know your group of students the best and will no doubt make your own discoveries and develop your own tricks along the way.

3 to 7-year-olds have a relatively short attention span, so keep the class high energy and fast paced. Each lesson has multiple activities that cover specific theatre skills so that you will have plenty of ideas to work with. If you find yourself with extra time, repeat an activity that worked well from a previous class. When your little ones discover an activity they love, they will want to do it over and over again!



- Jessica McCuiston

Lesson Activity Overview

Lesson 1

Jumping Jessica
What Is Theatre?
Find Similarities
If You're Happy and You Know It
Follow the Leader
Sleeping Animals

Lesson 2

Lesson 3

Lesson 4

Lesson 5

Lesson 6

Lesson 7

Lesson 8

Lesson 9

Lesson 10

Lesson 11

Lesson 12

Creating a Show for

Little Ones

Script
Music
Choreography

Performance Tips

Auditions
Rehearsals
Showtime Reminders

We Are Monsters Songs and Scenes Version

Information on how to obtain this optional 15-minute musical for little ones.

Appendix

If You're Happy and You Know It
Boom Chicka Boom
List of Tongue Twisters

The purchased version shows every activity in every lesson :)

Lesson 1: Getting to Know You

Objective:

Students will feel comfortable in a new environment, realizing that theatre class is a place where they can make new friends while learning how to sing, dance, and act.

Warm-Up: Jumping Jessica

- Everyone stands in a circle. Tell students to think of their first name and the letter their name starts with. Then tell them to think of a word that begins with that same letter which they can act out. It can be an action, adjective (describing word), animal, etc.
- Start with your own name as an example (mine is always “Jumping Jessica”), showing them how to do a movement that corresponds with your descriptive word-name combination.
- Everyone repeats the word-name combination while doing the movement. You may need to help younger students when it becomes their turn.
- After everyone has had a turn, start again but this time have them as a group repeat the word-name and movement for each person around the circle to see if they can remember everyone’s name and action.
- This is a useful activity to repeat at the beginning of class for the first few weeks until everyone knows each other’s names.

Discussion: What Is Theatre?

- Ask students, “What is theatre?” Some of them may have never seen a play, so explain how live theatre is different from watching a movie.
- Talk about how musical theatre consists of singing, dancing, and acting. Tell them that you’ll be doing a little bit of all three things during every class.
- Show them where the audience will sit if you have a final presentation or show. Have them face this direction whenever possible so they get used to turning their bodies toward the audience.

Focus: Find Similarities

- The group walks around the room, looking at each other carefully.
- Say, “Find someone who has the same _____ as you” (shirt, shoes, eyes, hair, etc).
- Have them form a group with people who share this similarity and review each other’s names.
- Repeat until everyone has ended up in several different groups. Explain that people can be different and the same in many ways.

Voice: If You're Happy and You Know It

- Sing the song, “If You're Happy and You Know It”. Most students are familiar with it or will catch on quickly. The lyrics are included in the appendix.
- Do the standard verses, then repeat with different actions like “turn around”, “laugh out loud”, and “take a bow”.
- These simple songs are a great way to introduce kids to singing in unison.

Movement: Follow the Leader

- Everyone lines up behind you as the leader.
- Explain that each person needs to follow the person that is right in front of them (this is a surprisingly hard concept for very young students) and not get out of line.
- Have them follow you around the room in a variety of ways: marching, hopping, skipping, tiptoeing, ice skating, flying, swimming, riding a horse, like a robot, etc.
- After the group gets the hang of it, you can select an older student to become the “leader”.

Imagination: Sleeping Animals

- Everyone spreads out around the room. Tell them that you are turning off the lights (don't be scared!) and they should pretend to go to sleep.
- When the lights come on, call out the name of an animal and have everyone move around the room pretending to be that animal.
- When the lights turn off they go back to sleep. Repeat several times with different animals.
- Remind the students to use their entire body and face to become the animal.

Reflection Question:

What are the three things we do in theatre (*singing, acting, dancing*) and which one is your favorite so far?



Lesson 2: Make Believe

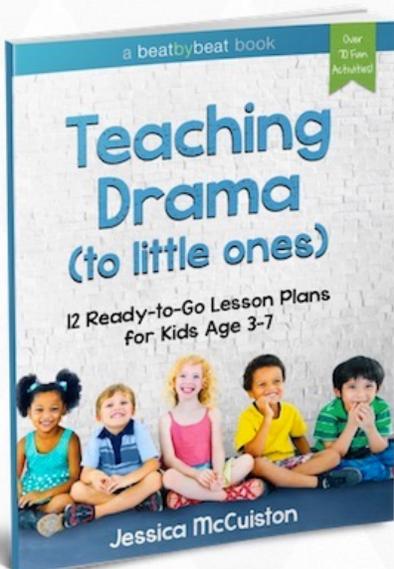
Objective:

Students will use their imaginations to be different characters and go on make believe adventures.

Warm-Up: Imagination Stretching

- Everyone sits in a circle and follows you in a variety of floor stretches.
- Butterfly – put the bottoms of your feet together and move your knees up and down like a butterfly. Ask students where they want to fly today and fly fast and fly slow as you pretend to go there. Then land on a flower (nose to toes) and *butterflies go to sleep*. When they wake up, ask what color flower they landed on.
- Windshield Wipers – put your legs straight out in front of you and move your feet like windshield wipers, back/forth and in/out. Reach up high for the rain clouds and pull them down onto your feet (nose to knees).
- Spider – open your legs out to the sides. Hook your thumbs together to make spiders. Have the spiders crawl all the way over to one foot, then the other foot, then all the way out to the middle (nose to floor).
- Seal – lie on your stomach and push up off the floor with your arms straight. Reach your nose up to the air and pretend to balance a ball like a seal. Then bend your knees back and try to touch your toes to the back of your head.

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