

Lily's Crossing Workshop Outline

Framing and Introduction

Introduce Self

Questions & Discussion:

Have any of you been to a play/live theatre? Been in a play or on stage? Have you read **Lily's Crossing**?

Format & Guidelines:

- Some exercises include everyone, others involve taking turns and giving your attention to the "actors" on stage.
- Everyone will get a chance to participate "on stage" today one time, if they would like.
- Once you've been on stage, please keep your hand down when I ask for volunteers.
- When you are on stage, be sure to follow the directions given and make appropriate/good choices. (if you choose to play differently, you may be asked to return to the audience.)

My Hope is that by the end of our time today, you will:

1. Know something about acting and the theatre that you didn't before
2. Have explored what makes a story come to life on stage
3. Understand the story behind the play, and know what to expect at the show
4. Be looking forward to the performance!

Focus Check:

When your teachers need your attention, or for the group to re-focus, they may clap their hands, or raise their hand in the air....when I want your attention, I will say "**Focus Front**".

When your focus is on the stage, your voice is off, your body is still and your eyes are on the stage...this is called **Audience Attention**.

Workshop Content

Story Background

The play, *Lily's Crossing* is based on the book by Patricia Reilly Giff. It is a fiction story, but is set in a historical context and is based on actual events, places, and experiences of the author when she was a young girl during WWII. Lily spends each summer in Rockaway Beach, NY with her Poppy (father) and Gram. She loves summers there because nothing ever seems to change...it's

consistent and safe. She plays with her friend Margaret and her older brother Eddie, she swims and fishes, goes to the bakery and enjoys carefree days.

This particular summer in 1944, things are very different. The war is on, gas is scarce, foods are rationed...people could only get small amounts of things such as butter and sugar. Her friend, Margaret, moves away from Rockaway so that her Dad can work in a factory building B-52 bombers for the war. Margaret's brother, (any many others) are soldiers fighting overseas. Lily's own father has to go away to "help in the war effort". This is especially difficult for her because her mother died when she was very young and Lily has little memory of her. Even though she still has her Gram, she feels very alone and frightened about the war and her father's absence.

Lily tends to lie a lot and she has a very active imagination, which tends to get her into sticky situations. She is convinced that there are Nazi spies lurking around Rockaway Beach, and pretend to be a spy herself. She watches the skies and the ocean for enemy planes and ships, worried as many people were that they were going to be under attack. She tells people that her aunt, whom she hasn't seen in some time, is a foreign spy. When her dad has to leave, she tells her friend that he is in the Secret Service.

When Albert mysteriously shows up at a neighbors, she thinks he is a spy. As the story progresses, she and Albert become best friends, and she confesses to Albert lies she has told, and he shares the story of his younger sister Ruth. Albert wants to learn to swim, because he believes Lily when she claims she is going to swim out into the ocean and go aboard a ship bound for Europe to find her Poppy. She finally has to convince Albert that it isn't possible, that she made it up.

Theatre Conventions

While watching a play, we have to use our imaginations also.

We need to willingly **Suspend our Disbelief**, which means that although we know that what is happening on stage is not real, we let ourselves pretend that the characters are real people (not actors), and that the events on stage are actually happening.

Playrights (people who write plays) have techniques they use to help tell the story called **THEATRE CONVENTIONS**.

Some of the Theatre Conventions used in Lily's Crossing are:

(ask students for a raise of hands if they think they know the answer)

1. **Doubling-** An Actor playing more than one role

Why would they do this instead of having separate actors for each part? (discuss that this is a touring show) Actors may have to play very different types of characters

2. **Freezing-** When some characters are "frozen" during a scene. This can be used when other character are sharing a memory, or a dream, etc.

3. **Direct Address**- Sometimes called breaking the 4th wall, when an actor talks directly to the audience, narrates a scene
4. **Treatment of Time**- Any amount of time can pass in just a few minute...time can be put into fast forward
5. **Special Effects**- Lighting and sounds effects, and music can heighten the drama and get an audience more involved

What types of sound effects might be used to help create an authentic atmosphere for the play? (Big Band Music, Aircrafts, radio broadcast, new reports about the war, ocean sounds)

Actor's Toolkit (group of 8-10)

Actors also have techniques that they use to help communicate the story. These techniques are part of their Actors Toolkit.

Show face first, add gestures, body language, the voice

Give a **situation** for them to react to:

- **Eating a candy bar...because the war is on, you haven't candy in ages...it tastes so good!**
- **You are spying on the neighbor and realize you've been seen**
- **You just found out that your Father is going away, and you don't know when he'll be back**
- **Your Gram is making you practice piano, which you hate!**
- **Your frightened because you hear low flying planes overhead and think they are enemy aircraft**

Tableaux "Flip book" (5-8 pairs of students, may be done with multiple groups)

Give character styles:

- **old Gram or Grandpa**
- **Lily pretending to be a spy**

Shake it out (whole Group Stretch)

Snapshots with 5 second action! Frozen scene, allow 2-3 characters to show action at a time (demonstrate the use of freezing in the scene)

In various locations: Rockaway Beach, at the shore

On a ship crossing the Atlantic toward America

A kid playing during the 1940's

Read Lily's Crossing Scene- small group act it out:

Albert: I was very afraid of the Nazis in France.
Lily: It's all right, I would have been afraid too, I would have shut my eyes too.
Albert: I wanted to come to America, I wanted to be safe.
Lily: Oh Albert.
Albert: I left Ruth, she was sleeping when they came. I didn't even say Goodbye.
She was so sick, that's when they came, I heard them..
(Albert & Lily Freeze)
Officer: The boat sails as scheduled! There's nothing to discuss!
Take the girl!
Nun: I agree she should be in the hospital but..
Officer: Just do it before she infects everyone!
Nun: Very well, poor little girl.
(Officer & Nun exit)
Albert: Ruth has no family except for me...
Lily: Don't worry, the war will be over and Ruth will come, and my Poppy, and we'll all be at Rockaway together!

Questions?