

Skippyjon Jones

Framing and Introduction

- **Introduce Self**

- **Questions & Discussion:**

- Raise your hand if you have an idea why I am here at your school today... Great!

- Have any of you been to a play/live theatre? Been in a play or on stage?

- How is live theatre different than a movie? They both take place in a theatre, they both have actors...how are they different?

- Wow, you guys really know a lot about theatre!

Why do you think a theatre company would choose this book to turn into a musical?

Discuss the Playwrite, Director

- This particular play is produced by a company called, "TheatreworksUSA" and they are a TOURING company. Raise your hand if you have an idea of what that TOURING means. *(some kids get this right off the bat, others talk about looking at different things, etc. You can use comparisons of different kind of tours...touring the school and seeing different rooms, etc. Then compare to say, Justin Bieber or Selina Gomez (these will get all kinds of reaction!). What do they do when they go "on tour"?)*

- Great! So this touring company is from New York! They have to travel pretty far to do this show for you, and they need to make sure they are prepared. They load everything they need into a big moving type truck and drive it across the country. What types of things will they need to bring to put on a show? *(you will get ALL kinds of responses here...I just spin them all into a correct answer ☺ and lead into what I am hoping they will say!)*

- Costumes, props (what is that?), scenery or set, microphones *(I explain that they are wireless...look for the tiny wire at the show)*, some things will already be at the theatre when they arrive like lights, color gels, sound systems...

- The MOST important thing they bring is....it's a pretty big deal...everybody lean in (keep your seats on your seat, just lean in so you can hear..) it is their ACTOR'S TOOLKIT! Huh? Let's see everyone make a Huh? Expression with their face...great, now put your hands on your hips, pull your head back and say, Huh?!

- You just used your actors toolkit! *(talk about facial expressions, gestures, body language and voice...I try to be super aware if there is a student that is unable to use all of these tools and mention that actors can use some or all)*

- **We are going to all be actors now! Here's how it is going to work.**

- Some exercises include everyone, others involve taking turns and giving your attention to other students.
- Everyone will get a chance to participate, but that means we need to be REALLY good Audience members when it's NOT your turn to talk or act.

How would SUPER AUDIENCE member act?

- When you are acting, be sure to follow the directions given and make appropriate/good choices. "Actors follow the directions of the director...I am the director!" (*this can be silly mock tough director...they love it!*)

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 "Spotlight on the Stage" and you will make a bright shining spotlight on the stage. Let's practice...everybody wiggle and giggle, and "Spotlight on the stage". (*the "clap" always seems to get their attention, when other tactics fail ☺*)

When your spotlight 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

- **Warm-ups (Whole Group)**

It is very important for actors to warm up their bodies and voices prior to performing. (Compare to importance of sports warm-ups for those that play soccer, baseball, gymnastics, or even PE).

-**Shake it Out! Hand, hand, foot foot booty, body, tongue** 5 down to 1, using different styles or speeds

- Or-

-**Apple Tree Stretch**

Pretend to plant an apple seed, water it, sunshine, and grow like the tree from seed to sapling to enormous apple tree touching the sky! Now reach up and try to pick an apple, reach with the other arm, jump as high as you can, climb up to pick ONE big juicy apple. Wash, polish, and take a big bite, make large chewing motions, wipe juice off your chin, etc, take a couple more bites and discover the worm...ooh disgusting face...Pick the worm out and look around for a good place for a worm, (maybe a nice squishy muddy area, or a tasty compost pile...or?). Repeat or put the apple core in the compost for the worm.

Skippyjon Jones has an incredible imagination and loves to pretend to be all different kinds of characters. Now it's our turn! You are all Skippyjon.

- **Character Styles –Director Says**
 - The Director’s job is to help the actors know what they are doing on stage and how to portray a character...I am going to be the director and give YOU directions!
 - Give directions to be a bird- put your hands under your armpits to make wings, stick your head forward, bug your eyes out, make a beak with your mouth, say “Cheep cheep!”
 - Whale- arch your back, lift your arms over your head and v...e...r...y... slowly pretend you’re diving into the waves and up again. Now let’s talk like a whale (al la Dori in Finding Nemo).
 - Dog- put your paws in front of you, let your tongue hang out, make your tail wag back and forth

- **Pantomime Skippy’s Closet- just using our facial expressions, body language and gestures, (no voice) we are going to PANTOMIME or pretend we find in Skippy’s closet (staying seated)!**
 - Show me that you are turning the doorknob and slowly pulling open the door....without making any sound, show me that the contents of the closet just fell out on top of you...now dig your way out!
 - Now I am going to pantomime pulling something from the pile! Raise your hand if you think you know what it is.
 - Now, without any sound, I want you to carefully pull something from the closet pile. Take a good look at it and show us what you would do with it. I am going to look around and see if I can tell what you have found!

- **Do as I say, not as I do (Whole group-wiggle release)**

- **Snapshots “TABLEUX” with 5 second action! (2 groups) remind about actors tools, levels, cheating out**
We are going INTO the closet and see what amazing locations we can find!
Remember LEVELS- front row be a pirate on a low level, middle row, middle level, back row, high level
 1. You have found yourself in the deserts of Old Mexico.
 2. Under the deep blue sea
 3. In Outer Space
 4. A Haunted House
 5. Insect world...you are something that is so small it could hide in the grass
 6. A lush Jungle full of vines, plants and animals

Whole group activity: El Skippito Friskito!

- Give a small bounce, now a bigger bounce and Freeze with your eyes open big and your mouth open, surprised look! Now everyone say, "Holy Guacamole!" and "What was that?!" "My ears are too big for my head" (feel big ears on top of your head), "My head is too big for my body!" (put hands on head), "I am not a Siamese Cat" (shocked look), "I am a Chihuahua!" (Everyone let out a little "yip")
- Pretend to rummage in your toy box and pull out a mask, put it on, then pull out a blanket and tie it on like a cape, now pull out your Nerf sword
- "I am Skippito Friskito (clap clap)...I fear not a single Bandito (clap clap)!"

Closing and questions:

1. When you arrive at the theatre (Everett Civic Auditorium or Everett Performing Arts Center for Everett/ Meydenbauer for Bellevue) there will be someone there to greet you and give you directions on entering the theatre.
2. Remember, you should turn off your voice and be ready to follow directions.
3. You will see Ushers (volunteers) wearing blue vests at the show. They are there help out. They will show you right where to sit, just follow their directions. The shows are very full, so it is important to sit where they ask you too. Your teachers may want to move people around once we know that everyone has a seat. They can also direct you to restrooms, answer questions and, in the event that you forget where you are sitting, or can't find your group, they are there to help.
4. It is ok to talk quietly before the show, but how about once the show starts?
5. Your "cue" that the show is going to start is when you see the "house lights" (explain what the house is) get darker and light comes up on the stage.
6. You will see Erica, the Pied Piper Manager, go up on stage to welcome you and make the pre-show announcements.
7. What do we do at the end of the show? That's right, we clap to show our appreciation for all the hard work that went into the performance.
8. After the actors leave the stage, Erica will go back up on stage and dismiss the schools group by group.

Questions?

Thank you!

