

Monkey Breath

Developed by: Jonathan “John Laughsalot” Mincks (hotshot@hotshotperformer.com)
Artform(s): Drama, Storytelling

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Recall elements of the story.
- Deepen their understanding of *Monkey Breath* through directed play using pantomime.

Materials Needed

- None

Recall the Story

Recall is one of the most important tools for the learning experience. Recalling the story in sequence is a difficult and complex task that can reinforce the key learning outcomes with great effect. Here are some ideas on how to help students recall the story in sequential order.

Note: It is important to use positive reinforcement and acceptance of all input from students when conducting a “recall the story” session. Individual students will have slightly different recollections of key elements because of their emotional involvement or interest with certain parts of the story. More interesting parts may have a greater value to our intellect or emotion at the time. It is only as we later recall the lesson that these details become more accessible and important.

- After watching the video, ask students about the story:
 - Who liked the story *Monkey Breath*?
 - What was the story about?
 - What was a part of the story you liked?

Tips: Try not to say, “What was your *favorite* part?” or “What was the *best* part?” These are difficult questions for many young students to answer. They can feel pressure, as if having to decide which part was the best. They may have liked many parts. “What was a part you liked?” or “What was something you liked about the story?” takes the pressure off and garners more involvement.

- Next, ask students to recall elements of the story. Begin by asking students “How did the story start?”

Tips: Recall and sequence may be difficult for some, so use directed questions. If you get a response that is not what you are looking for, acknowledge it positively, and then try a different tactic. Sample questions may include:

- Encouragement: “Well, that DID happen, but I think there was something before that. What was it? I can’t remember.”
- Directed Questions: These are questions that directly hint students toward a specific element. Examples include:
 - “Wait! Where did the story take place?” (Jungle, Monkey Town, etc.)
 - “What was the name of the town?” (“OH!!! That’s right! Monkey Town! What a great place!”)
 - “What did the little monkeys do when they woke up?”

- Directed Play: These types of intentional questions can be continued to let the children reenact the story with directed play, in which they are led but allowed to diverge from the story somewhat so their creative inspiration is affirmed. The story might change a bit. For example, they may introduce that they “see a hippo!” at the lake. Allow students to imagine how that affects the story. A suggested response may be, “OH! There is a hippo at the lake today. We better watch out and not get too close to that hippo while we play in the lake. Do you remember what the Little Monkeys did when they got to the lake?” It’s OK if there are hippos at the lake this time. Just try to direct the story away from the hippos or something like that taking over because that would not be recall (see Option 2 for directed play extension, Games at a Distance).