

Teaching Artist Lesson

Monkey Breath

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Artform(s): Dance/Movement, Drama, Storytelling

Description

Monkey Breath is a lighthearted children’s story that introduces and reinforces behaviors of safe practices, distancing, and hygiene.

Learning Objectives

Students will:

- Develop new and reinforce existing safe practices for play in social settings regarding distancing, hygiene, and crowd interaction.
- Explore and associate animal characteristics by recreating them in pantomime.
- Develop fine and gross motor skills through movements.

Students’ Prior Knowledge Necessary For This Experience

- It is recommended for students to have some prior knowledge of monkeys and jungle settings.

Vocabulary

Arts Vocabulary:

- Act
- Character
- Pantomime
- Setting
- Story

Curriculum Content Vocabulary:

- Habitat (jungle)
- Opposites (near/far)

Materials Needed

- One tissue, piece of paper, or napkin for each student. Optionally, cut paper into leaf shapes and have students color them green.
- Copy of *Monkey Breath*.

Lesson Plan

Warm Up

- Ask students to stand in a place where they can stretch, but not touch anyone.
- Explain that we are going to hear a story about monkeys, but first we need to do some monkey stretches.
- Move students through some stretches that mimic monkey movements.

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Main Experience

“Playing a Story” is an interactive story-telling technique that keeps students engaged and active by using questions, requests, and pantomime to have students act out elements together as the artist tells the story. In *Monkey Breath*, students act out play, washing, covering noses, and creating new elements as the story unfolds.

- As the story starts, the storyteller uses visuals of monkeys, jungle, and banana trees flashed on screen for clear definition of topics and to describe the setting and characters.
- Monkey Town is in the banana tree jungle between Hippo Lake and The Spillalittle Waterfall.
- When all the little monkeys wake up in Monkey Town they stretch and yawn.
 - Ask students: “Can you stretch and yawn? Good job!”
- After they wake up, then the monkeys like to go to Hippo Lake to wash and play.
 - Ask students: “They swing through the banana trees. Can you swing like a monkey with me? Wow! Great swinging!”
- At Hippo Lake they have to lookout for hippos and be very careful not to get too close. But one day when they got to the lake there were no hippos.
 - Ask students: “Look around. Can you see any hippos?”
- As the story unfolds, the little monkeys think the other little monkeys have bad breath. They learn from the wise old monkey that it is not their breath. It is something in the water at the lake, and now they have it all over them.
- The monkeys must go wash at the waterfall.
 - Ask students: “Can you wash up at the waterfall with me? Great job!”
- The monkeys also learn how to wear a banana leaf over their mouths to protect others.
 - Hand each student a tissue, mask, or his or her banana leaf they made.
 - Ask students: “How should you wear your banana leaf like the monkeys?”
- The monkeys feel bad about not being able to get close to their friends, but they come up with games they can play at a distance and continue to have fun.
- At the end, all the monkeys have learned a lesson about safety and had a good laugh because it wasn’t “monkey breath.”

Wrap Up

- After listening to the story, ask students to recap what they learned. Suggested questions:
 - “Did you like that story?”
 - “What part did you like?”
 - “What happened first? Next?”
- Relate the messages in the story to real life experiences. Suggested questions:
 - “How did you feel when the Wise Old Monkey was angry with them?”
 - “Have you ever felt bad about not being able to play the way you want?”
 - “What are some things you could play if that happened?”
- Ask students to pantomime a part of the story. Suggested questions:
 - “Let’s climb a tree to get a banana.”
 - “How would you climb up a tree?”
 - “How would you pick the banana?”
 - “How would you eat a banana?”
 - “What would you do with the peel?”

Note: Pantomime is a complex motor skill that helps develop creative thought and problem solving, as well as spatial awareness and fine and gross motor skills. As an example, eating a banana can start with holding an imaginary banana and taking a bite. A pantomime can start with climbing a tree, then picking the banana, peeling it, and finally eating and disposing of the peel. The detail of things like how the banana is held (with or without space in fist for the imaginary banana or how many details of the action are included, e.g., swallow, bite, etc.) can help understand developmental range, emotional expression, and level of spatial awareness. Spatial awareness is an exceptionally important cognitive skill resulting in increased dexterity, sense of balance, flexibility, and body strength.

Intentional Questions

Open-Ended

- What other animals could you find in the jungle?
- How do different animals move?
- What part of the story did you like?

Problem Solving/Critical Thinking

- The monkeys put banana leaves on their faces to not smell the bad smell. What else could they do to not smell it on each other?
- What game can we play while we stay a little bit away from each other?

Factual Questions

- Who are the characters?
- What do the banana trees look like? Did they have big leaves or small?
- What do monkeys eat?