



Theatre and Culture for Early Years

Theatre Direct Canada Teacher Resources – *Flying Hearts*

Big Questions:

- How can we use our bodies to tell a story?
- How do different settings or environments change the way we think or feel?
- How do we as audience members interact with stories within different storytelling techniques?

FDK Curriculum Links:

- 1.6: Use language (verbal and nonverbal communication) to communicate thinking, to reflect, and to solve problems
- 2.2: Demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences and to adapt to new situations
- 7.1: Participate actively in creative movement and other daily physical activities
- 21.1: Express responses to drama and dance
- 23.3: Use problem solving skills and imagination to create music

Pre-Show Discussion/Activities:

- Are we able to tell and understand stories using our bodies? How can we do this? What can we use, other than words, to help us understand and communicate?
- Encourage a discussion of the four elements expressed in *Flying Hearts* (light, water, air, and earth). Create a web, allowing children to reflect on what they know about these words. Allow them to draw pictures, discuss with each other, and make meaning of what these words are, and can be, prior to attending the show.

Post-Show Discussion:

- How did the dancers use their bodies to tell a story? How did you know what they were doing and how they were feeling?
- Did the performers change how you think or feel about light, water, air, and earth? Revisit the discussion of the elements prior to visiting the show, and see if the children have anything to add to their ideas.



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The following is an activity guide intended for use in the classroom after viewing the performance of *Flying Hearts*. Any number of these activities may be explored, based on children's interests and inquiries following post-show discussions. Also included are adaptations to make the activities more suitable for children of varying ages.

Making Rain Sticks

In *Flying Hearts*, the musician used a drum to replicate the sound of waves in the ocean. This activity will allow children to make a creative instrument to take home with them, that sounds like the rain. Encourage the children to think about what rain sounds like, and how they may interact with the rain in different environments. This rain stick will allow the children to bring ideas of playing in the rain into the classroom.

Curriculum Links:

14.1: Ask questions about natural occurrences, using their own observations and representations

23.3: Use problem solving skills and imagination to create music

24.3: Make predictions and observations as part of process of creating and designing

Materials:

- Paper towel roll
- Aluminum foil
- Popcorn kernels/dry beans/rice
- Plastic wrap
- Tape
- Paint/other art materials to decorate

Introduction:

- Prior to introducing the rain sticks, encourage a discussion about rain: ask children what they know about rain, how they engage with rain, and perhaps questions they have about the rain
- Present a completed rain stick
 - Ask children what the sound makes them think of
 - If there is time, provide materials for a free drawing session, where an educator walks around the room using the rain stick, and children draw what the sounds make them think of
- At a small table, set up materials for creating rain sticks for children to work in small groups



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Activity:

- First, encourage the children to decorate their paper towel rolls (if they are painting, this may get messy – be sure to put down newspaper)
- Once paper towel rolls have been decorated and dried, crumble up a piece of aluminum foil that is the length of the roll, and place it inside (this will keep the corn kernels/beans/rice from moving around inside the roll too quickly, creating a more realistic sound)
- Wrap a thick piece of plastic wrap around one end of the roll, and tape it in place
- In the open end of the paper towel roll, put about 1 tablespoon of corn kernels/beans/rice inside the roll
- Put plastic wrap around the other end of the roll, and tape in place
- Tip the finished rain stick back and forth to test it out

Adaptations:

- For younger children:
 - Provide more help and instructions in the creation of the rain stick
 - Use hand-over-hand techniques as necessary
 - For video instructions, visit:
<http://www.pbs.org/parents/crafts-for-kids/diy-rainstick/>
- For older children:
 - Encourage children to explore different ways to move the rain stick to create different sounds, including how fast or slow they move the stick
 - Read a story about the rain, such as *Listen to the Rain* by Bill Martin Jr., and invite the children to use their rain sticks as they listen along

Puffy Painting

Flying Hearts encourages children to try new, hands-on, sensory experiences. By mixing shaving cream, white glue, and food colouring, children can paint and create images using a texturized material that is soft and fluffy once dry.

Curriculum Links:

2.2: Demonstrate a willingness to try new experiences and to adapt to new situations

31.3: Explore different elements of design in visual arts



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Materials:

- Shaving cream
- White glue
- Food colouring
- Hard paper or paper plates to paint on
- Popsicle sticks

To Make the Paint:

- Mix equal parts shaving cream and glue
- Add food colouring to the mixture
- Be sure to provide a hard textured painting surface, such as bristol board, cardstock, watercolour paper, or paper plates (the paint will be too heavy for soft paper)

Activity Exploration:

- In small groups, children can be provided with various colours of paint, and popsicle sticks to apply the paint to their surface (they can also use their hands if they would like to)
- Encourage the children to experiment with how they apply the paint to the page in order to achieve the desired, textured effect
- Allow the paint to dry for at least 24 hours – it will be soft to the touch, but no colour will come off once it is dry

Adaptations:

- For older children:
 - See additional resources for more complicated recipes that allow for additional tactile painting experiences
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Homemade Wind Chimes

The performers in *Flying Hearts* play with air and wind. This creative activity will allow children to observe and explore how the wind acts on different objects, and how objects can work together to create unique sounds. This activity is also a great way to encourage the use of recycled materials.

Curriculum Links:

23.2: Use problem-solving skills and their imagination to create visual art forms

24.4: Select and use tools, equipment, and materials to construct things

29.3: Identify ways in which they can care for and show respect for the environment

Materials:

- Empty tin/metal cans of various sizes and assortments
- Hammer
- Nail
- Paint and other materials to decorate
- String or twine
- Plastic lid

Introduction:

- Engage the children in a discussion about wind
 - Ask them what they know about wind, how they know it is there, and what effects it can have on the world around them
- If possible, bring in a set of wind chimes – have the children try to guess what they may be used for, and how they work
- Encourage the children to bring in recycled cans/tins to create their own wind chimes – when they are brought in, be sure to remove any labels, clean the cans thoroughly, and use the hammer and nail to put a hole through the bottom of each can in the middle

Activity:

- In small groups, provide clean cans with holes in them to the children to paint and decorate – set these aside to dry
- Once the cans are dry, provide long pieces of string or twine to the children to tie the cans together
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- With the bottoms facing up, put the string through the hole and tie a knot inside the can
- About 8 inches down on the same piece of string, attach another can, tying the string inside
- Add one more can to this piece of string (or however many the child would like)
- Create at least 1 more string of cans
- Poke holes in the plastic lid, and tie the strings attached to the cans through the lid, so that they hang down with the bottoms facing up
- Poke a hole in the middle of the plastic lid, and tie a string through this hole, which can then be hung to allow the tin cans to dangle and hit each other, creating sound

Adaptations:

- For younger children:
 - Provide support with the tying and attaching of the strings and cans
- For older children:
 - Encourage children to incorporate other materials onto the strings to create different sounds with their wind chimes

Environment Sounds Drawing

Throughout *Flying Hearts*, the performers move their bodies according to how different sounds and elements make them feel. This art activity will allow children to connect with the sounds of nature, including different animals, as well as the air and wind, and water if this is accessible, to create a drawing that is representative of how nature makes them think and feel.

Curriculum Links:

22.1: Communicate their ideas about something through visual arts

23.4: Communicate their understanding of something by representing their ideas and feelings through the arts

31.3: Explore different elements of design in visual arts



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Materials:

- Paper/sketch books
- Pencil crayons/crayons/markers
- Any other art materials you would like to use

Introduction:

- Prior to going outside, ask children to consider what kinds of sounds they hear in their neighbourhood – are these different depending on if they are in nature, or if they are surrounded by city life?
- Talk about how different sounds might look if they were put onto paper – what colour would the wind be? What about the sound of a bus or a streetcar?
- When heading out on the walk, encourage children to be mindful of what they can hear, and how the sounds can be translated into different elements of design (colour, line, shape, form, texture)

Activity:

- Find a spot to sit outside – perhaps decide on this prior to setting out, and be sure there is enough room for everyone to sit comfortably while drawing
- Each child should have enough art materials with them to comfortably switch between various colour or tools, depending on the texture, line, shape, or colour they are trying to represent
- Prompt children to close their eyes, and listen to the sounds around them – focus on the specific elements of the environment, including the wind in the trees, cars, people, running water (if it is available), etc.
- Ask the children to open their eyes when they feel ready, and use their art materials to represent what they heard – this can be figurative or abstract
- Encourage children to stop and listen again if they are having trouble representing the sounds of their environment on paper – this activity can be as long or as short as you would like

Reflection:

- Ask the children to share what they have created
 - Why did they choose a certain colour? What were they thinking about when they made certain shapes or lines?
- Encourage the children to talk about how the drawings may have been different given a different environment
 - If this activity was done in a city park, talk about how it may have been different in a forest, or vice versa



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Adaptations:

- For younger children:
 - This activity can be done in the form of movement as well
 - Audio record an environment that the children are familiar with and bring this into the classroom – the children can be encouraged to move their bodies, using small or large movements, to correspond to the sounds of their environment
 - For older children:
 - If children are stronger writers, they can also write to accompany their drawings (in the form of poetry, a story, or even just words that might come to mind)
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Additional Resources

<https://www.learning4kids.net/2012/10/16/how-to-make-puffy-paint/>

An additional recipe for puffy paint.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/blog/2015/06/11/10-fun-summer-diy-sensory-games-kids>

This blog post, from Autism Speaks, provides unique sensory experiences to engage children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. They offer fun, simple sensory experiences that can be used in a variety of locations. While they do focus on children with ASD, many of these activities could also be used with young children as well.

<https://preschoolinspirations.com/how-to-make-a-perfect-sensory-bottle/>

Sensory bottles are a great way to engage and calm young children, and children with ASD. This blog, by Katie, provides great insight into how to make successful sensory bottles, and how adults and educators can use them appropriately at home or in a classroom. Katie includes a lot of tips on different sensory bottles that can be made, and allows for lots of creativity. With this in mind, sensory bottles can be made that allow adults or educators to extend the elements of light, water, air, and earth of *Flying Hearts* into the home or classroom.

The Black Book of Colors by Menena Cottin



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This unique book, which incorporates braille and raised images, provides a perspective on colour and design which many individuals often overlook. It allows children to explore typical visual experiences, such as colour, line, and shape, through a tactile experience. The descriptions of the colours in the book allow children to consider how others may perceive their world around them.

What Does Peace Feel Like? By Vladimir Radunsky

Vladimir Radunsky asked children around the world what peace feels like to them, and their responses provided the content for this book. It encourages children to think about peace as it relates to their senses. The children can consider what peace looks like, sounds like, smells like, tastes like, and feels like. When reading, encourage children to also consider how peace can be represented using the four elements present in *Flying Hearts*.