



## Theatre and Culture for Early Years

### Theatre Direct Canada Teacher Resources – *Sisters, the warm embrace*

#### Big Questions:

- How can we know when our friends are feeling sad?
- How can we know when our friends are feeling happy?
- When you are sad, what are some things that make you feel happy again?

#### FDK Curriculum Links:

- 1.3: Use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other nonverbal means to communicate and respond
- 2.5: Develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other's feelings
- 3.3: Demonstrate an awareness of ways of making and keeping friends
- 5.1: Demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view
- 25.2: Identify and talk about their own interests and preferences

#### Pre-Show Discussion/Activities:

- How do you know when your friend is feeling happy? How do you know when your friend is feeling sad?
- Ask children to demonstrate with their faces and their bodies how they might look when they are happy, sad, excited, nervous, scared, angry, etc.
  - “Show me with your face and your body and no sound you are happy.”

#### Post-Show Discussion:

- What did Rosita do for Annou to try and make her feel better? What things worked? What things didn't?
- When you are sad, what are some things that make you feel happy?



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The following is an activity guide intended for use in the classroom after viewing the performance of *Sisters, the Warm Embrace*. 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.

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### **“If you love me, won't you please laugh.”**

The following activity encourages children to try and make their friends laugh. They are encouraged to practice what it takes to make other people happy, and the group can talk about what it means when something someone does or says makes them laugh.

#### Curriculum Links:

1.3: Use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other nonverbal means to communicate and respond

2.5: Develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to other's feelings

#### Activity:

- Have the children sit or stand in a circle, with one child in the middle
- The role of the child in the middle:
  - Go around to other children from inside the circle, saying the phrase, “If you love me, won't you please laugh?”
  - The child can say this phrase in any way they would like, and are encouraged to change their tone of voice and other nonverbal aspects
  - The child can also add other verbal statements to the phrase to try and make a child in the group laugh
- The role of the children in the circle:
  - Try not to laugh when the child in the middle approaches them!
  - When the child in the middle says their phrase, the child that was targeted must respond with, “You know I love you, but I just can't laugh.”
- If a child laughs while trying to respond to the child in the middle, they become the new child in the middle, trying to get others to laugh



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### Reflection:

- Ask the children questions about what was easy and what was challenging, as both the child in the middle, or being a target of laughter
  - What did your friend do to make you laugh?
  - Did you use any strategies to keep yourself from laughing?
  - What did you find more challenging? Trying to get your friends to laugh, or trying to keep yourself from laughing?
- From here, you may have a discussion about how we can keep these ideas in mind when we are working or playing with peers in the classroom to make sure everyone feels accepted, welcome, and like they are part of a group

### Adaptations:

- For older children:
  - Rather than asking their friends to laugh, they can ask them to smile. This makes the game more challenging, as children cannot smile when responding.

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### **Yarn Wrapping**

Rosita and Annou perform on stage and interact with yarn. This is a great material that can be used in crafts with young children, in a number of ways. This particular activity can be used to explore properties of shapes, letters, and numbers while also developing fine motor skills in children.

### Curriculum Links:

8.4: Demonstrate control of small muscles when using various materials or equipment

17.1: Explore, sort, and compare attributes and properties of traditional and non-traditional two-dimensional shapes

31.3: Explore different elements of design in visual arts



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### Materials:

- Cardboard
- Scissors or exacto knife
- Yarn of varying colours, sizes, and textures
- Tape

### Activity Exploration:

- While at a craft table, children can be presented with the yarn to first investigate and explore its properties
- Show children an example of a yarn wrapping
  - Ask questions about the texture, colours, and presence of lines
- Ask children what shape they may like to create a yarn wrapping of
  - This can be a letter, shape or number
  - Children can work together to create an alphabet, word, phrase, number sequence, or shape pattern by collaborating (encourage them to discuss and work together if they would like!)
- Once the child has decided on a shape, you can trace it and cut it out of cardboard for them
- If needed, demonstrate to the child how to wrap the yarn around the shape
  - Begin by cutting a long piece of yarn, and taping it to the back
  - Wrap the piece around the shape, until you reach the other end
  - Tape the other end, get another piece of yarn, and continue until the shape is fully covered, or as covered as the child would like it to be

### Reflection:

- Once the process is complete, ask the children about the shapes they have created
  - What shape did you create? Why?
  - What are some features of your shape? How many sides and corners does it have? What colours did you choose? Why?
  - Did you collaborate with anyone else? What word or pattern did you create?

### Adaptations:

- For younger children:
  - Allow children to explore the yarn, and use it in ways that feel natural to them
  - Provide assistance in wrapping the yarn if needed
  - Use thicker yarn
  - Cut smaller pieces of yarn to wrap



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- For older children:
    - Challenge children to create a pattern using yarn wrapped shapes
    - Keep yarn at the craft table to encourage additional creative uses of this material
    - Provide books on yarn weaving or other ways to creatively use yarn to encourage children to explore different materials in their art (see additional resources)
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### **“Show Me With Your Body, Your Face, and No Sound”**

Rosita and Annou demonstrate how they are feeling to one another by using their bodies and their faces. When we talk and interact with others, we can use our bodies and facial expressions to demonstrate how we are feeling. We can also try to understand how others are feeling, demonstrating empathy, by observing their face and bodies. This activity can help children understand how they might use facial expressions and body movements to convey different feelings and emotions.

#### Curriculum Links:

1.3: Use and interpret gestures, tone of voice, and other non-verbal means to communicate and respond

2.5: Develop empathy for others, and acknowledge and respond to each other’s feelings

#### Activity:

- Have the children sit or stand in a circle, where they can see one another
- The educator while direct the children to “show me with your body, your face, and no sound, that you are feeling: \_\_\_\_\_” (this can be any feeling: happy, sad, angry, scared, cold, hungry, etc.)
- Encourage the children to look around at their peers, and observe how others might look when they are feeling a certain way
- When all the children have had a chance to observe each other, prompt them to return to a neutral expression, and continue the activity until a wide variety of emotions and feelings have been expressed

#### Adaptations:

- For younger children:
  - In addition to the educator or adult providing the prompts, use flash cards that demonstrate the feeling that they are trying to represent



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- For older children:
  - Ask the children to provide prompts for different feelings
  - Debrief after the activity
    - How did you change the way your face or body looked to represent certain emotions?
    - Were there some emotions/feelings that were more similar to each other? How or why?
    - How did it make you feel to see everyone in the classroom looking sad or scared?

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### That's Me!

*Sisters, the Warm Embrace* encourages young children to connect with one another, and to be able to actively explore and experience empathy and friendship. This activity allows children to share special things about themselves with one another, and to connect with one another when they share certain attributes.

#### Curriculum Links:

- 1.2: Listen and respond to others non-verbally for a variety of purposes in a variety of contexts
- 3.1: Act and talk with peers and adults by expressing and accepting positive messages
- 5.1: Demonstrate respect and consideration for individual differences and alternative points of view

#### Activity:

- Invite the children to sit in a circle
- Going around the circle, ask each child to share something about themselves, such as their favourite colour, food, or animal, another language they speak, or anything else that they think is unique about them



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- Each child will stand up, and shares the fact with the rest of the group
- If this fact is also true for any other children in they group, they must jump up and yell, “that’s me!”
- This can continue around the circle until each child has had a turn, and has shared something about themselves with their peers

### Adaptations:

- For younger children:
  - Provide specific prompts
  - Ask children to share something specific about themselves (offer them to share a food, colour, or animal)
  - To ensure all children are able to share, encourage a specific direction to “freeze” after children have shouted “that’s me!” to allow for the activity to maintain focus
- For older children:
  - Debrief after the activity
    - How did it feel when many children shared a fact with you?
    - How did it feel if nobody shared a fact with you?
    - How can we make sure that even though we are different from one another, we can still support each other and be kind and respectful?

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### Additional Resources

<https://www.artbarblog.com/weaving-kids/>

In this blog, Barbara Rucci shares an intricate yarn weaving activity. This can be done with older children, but can also be explored with younger children to improve fine motor skills. The finished pieces can be colourful and creative, and allow children to experiment with different types, textures, sizes, and colours of yarn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrBEE7aydw>

This YouTube video demonstrates a traditional art form of yarn painting by the Indigenous Huichol peoples of Mexico. This provides a unique method of working with yarn that could also be shared with children, encouraging unique ways to engage with various art materials.

*Red: A Crayon’s Story* by Michael Hall



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In this story, Red is a crayon who does not seem to live up to the expectations required of him as a Red crayon, because he is, in fact, Blue. Red is sad, because nobody seems to understand who he is and how he is special. Red's friends try to help him along his adventure to be happy, but it isn't until someone accepts him for who he is that he truly understands how to be true to his inner self.

*My Friend is Sad* by Mo Willems

Gerald and Piggie are best friends. When Gerald is feeling down, Piggie tries his best to make him feel better. Similar to the relationship between Rosita and Annou, this book encourages children to feel empathy towards those they care about, in order to help others when they are feeling down.