



Backlight: Ensemble Workshop Lesson Plan

Intended for grades: Middle School- High School (Grades 5-12)

Length of Backlight On-Tour Performance: 1 hour

Length of Backlight Ensemble Building Workshop: 1 hour

LESSON OVERVIEW

Backlight Productions is a non-profit organization that gives individuals with special needs an opportunity to perform significant roles in a theatrical production. While Backlight strives to help these Performers grow and succeed, a main focus of these productions is to encourage the Actors involved through the support of audience members.

Backlight's Ensemble Building Workshop takes students and faculty members through a series of theatrical based exercises that focus on collaboration, partnership, and listening, while also affirming and celebrating the unique creative choices of each individual.

OBJECTIVE

Encourage empathy and team building skills by having students participate in a variety of Ensemble based Improvisational Theatre Exercises.

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

Backlight supports each school's compliance with Tennessee state laws T.C.A. § 49-6-1007(a) (Character Education), T.C.A. § 49-6-1007 through 1019 (Safety and Civility) and T.C.A. § 49-6-4503 (Bullying and Harassment).

Social Studies (reinforcing the traits of good citizens in a diverse and accepting community)

1.18 Define citizenship, and recognize traits of good citizens, such as respecting the rights of others, voting, following laws, etc.

GC.27 Identify and explain legislation and legal precedents that established rights for the underserved, including Title IX and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

CI.03 Analyze how cultural characteristics (e.g., language, religion, ethnicity, gender roles) link, divide, and/or define regions.

Fine Arts (using theater arts to send a message of kindness to counter prejudice and bullying)

6.T.R2.B Identify multiple cultural perspectives that may influence a theatrical work.

Foundation Cn2 - Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical text.

6.T.Cn1.A Explain how the actions and motivations of characters in a theatrical work may impact a community or culture's understanding.

8.T.Cn1.A Examine a community issue through a theatrical work.

HS3.T.Cn1.A Examine a community issue through multiple perspectives in a theatrical work.

HS2.T.Cn1.B Incorporate multiple perspectives and diverse community ideas in a theatrical work.

DELIVERY INSTRUCTION

1. Superhero Introductions: (10 minutes)

- Purpose: to establish names/recognition, to affirm the choices of each individual by repeating their sequence, and to begin making creative choices with the body and imagination
- Directions: Students stand in a circle and one at a time, enter the center of the circle. Upon entering the center, a student will say their name, what their superhero power would have, and create a physical pose. Students on the outside of the circle carefully observe these choices and then all together repeat the student's name, superhero power, and physical pose. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to introduce themselves.
- How it's connected to the show: The main theme of the show is, "Kindness is the ultimate superpower." In the Backlight-On Tour show, Marty (our protagonist) learns that the only way he defeat the various obstacles and face the different levels of school, is by showing kindness to others.

2. Mirror (15 minutes)

- Purpose: increase awareness, practice "giving & taking"
- Directions: Students are paired with a partner and decide on one person to be the A (leader) role and one person the B (follower) role. Students will stand directly across from one another and act as though they are looking in a mirror. Students will silently go through a variety of prompts (Ex: act as though you're brushing your teeth- now do that same task as though you're best friends, create a secret handshake together, etc.) exploring different tempos and movements, but they must do their best to mirror their partners movement/expression while taking turns leading and following. Explore different prompts with different partners.
- How it's connected to the show: In Scene 2, Marty connects with the other characters Josh and Sean by creating a unique handshake. These players explore using physical gestures as a way to connect with and show kindness to one another

3. Flock Dance (10 minutes)

- Purpose: to share the stage, to accept and affirm the offers of other individuals
- Directions: Students arrange themselves by placing one student at the front of the group with the other students staggered behind them (like a "flying V" or flock of birds.) A music selection is played and the player at the front begins leading a dance. The other players must follow the leader and repeat their exact movements as closely as possible. After 15-20 seconds a new leader moves to the front until each student has had the opportunity to try leading.
- How it's connected to the show: In Scene 3, Marty and Lemmy realize that they are both connected by their love of music. The players all encourage one another to dance, leading to one giant dance party in the cafeteria.

4. "I Am, I Like, I Do..." (10 minutes)

- Purpose: getting to know classmates/peers, help develop closer relationships
- Directions: Students stand in a circle. One student will go in the middle of the circle and say something that is personally true to them (starting their phrase with either, "I am, I like, or I do..." Example: I am an only child. Students who that is also true for will have to stand up and move to a different chair. During this time, the student in the center will also find a chair allowing a different student the opportunity to be in the center and share an interesting fact about themselves
- How it's connected to the show: After the show, we do a brief discussion where we give audience members the chance to meet and get to know a little bit about the Actors from the Backlight On-Tour production. During this time, we ask personal questions in an effort for students to see that similarities and connections span far beyond our physical or learning differences

5. Reflection (10 minutes)

- Directions: During this time, students will be able to talk about their experiences during the Ensemble workshop. Possible discussion questions: What were some things students enjoyed about working together? What were some of the challenges? How did they overcome these challenges? Who did they

personally connect with? How will these connections impact future interactions outside of the classroom?

Additional Exercises: Yes Lets, Five Things, Pass the Clap, Battle of the Bands, etc.

MATERIALS

- Ideally: Classroom or space that would allow students plenty of room during the course of certain exercises (or a classroom that could be rearranged to allow for greater range of movement during the Workshop)
- Speaker System (ability to play music- Backlight has a portable speaker if necessary)

ASSESSMENT/EVALUATION

Students will show evidence of skills and knowledge by:

- Participating in a variety of improvisational exercises
- Continuing to build relationships with students of various backgrounds, learning styles, etc.

NOTES:

The Backlight Ensemble Workshop can be performed in addition to the Backlight On-Tour Performance (1 hour) or this Workshop can also be scheduled independently.