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Overview

Character Education Book of Plays

Middle Years

Young people today are faced with more choices than ever. We give them house keys and expect them to avoid trouble, even though they are unsupervised. We drop them at the shopping centre and hope they do not make the wrong choices, fall in with the wrong crowd, do something slightly less than wise or even illegal. Many young people attend parties and are even offered illegal substances by parents wishing to be perceived as cool.

As parents, teachers and group leaders, we try to protect our children; however, every child must make some decisions daily without adult involvement, especially as they embark on the upper primary and secondary school journey. We hope that we have taught them well, and that we have armed them with common sense and the ethics they need to make the right choices.

For many students, it is more fun to get up and perform than it is to write an essay or read a book about a topic. With many people feeling less optimistic about the character development of our children, it is incumbent upon us to use every available tool.

This collection of monologues, duets, short plays and a two-act play encourages discussion of such issues as respect, love, honesty, responsibility, commitment, courage, patience, joyfulness, tolerance, loyalty and community spirit in a fun, hopeful and often humorous way. These scenes will be fun to perform, not only in drama classes, but in other classes, at scout meetings, with church groups or at recreation centres. As an added attraction, many children who would not thrive in a traditional academic environment may shine when they perform on stage. Theatre combines communication, creativity and self-expression, often resulting in amazing surprises.

Suggestions for scenery, costumes and props are included, as well as classroom exercises and discussion topics relative to the values within the plays.

Have a good time! Make programs! Construct makeshift costumes! Cut moustaches out of construction paper and throw popcorn! Do not worry about the character education – that will be sneaking in between the lines.



We Want Respect

A boy-band song to the tune of
I Want You Back by NSync



It's something that we all want
It's something that we all need, yeah
So tell me what to do now, 'cause
I, I, I, I, I, I
Want respect



It's hard to say I'm sorry
When I treat my brother hatefully
A lesson I've learnt too well for sure
(ahhh-ah-ah-ah)
But just give us a listen
We're trying to figure out just what to do
And we're gonna share some thoughts with you



It's something that we all want
It's something that we all need, yeah
We'll tell you what to do now
When you want respect



First and most important
We must feel respect for ourselves inside
Respect for where we came from, where we started
(ahhh-ah-ah-ah)



The Love Confusion



Teaching Materials to Accompany *The Love Confusion*

1. Write a short essay about a person who really loves you. How do you know they love you? What is your evidence? Do you know only by the things they say, or do their actions let you know also? What are they? Does this person always agree with your ideas? How do you behave in return?
2. As a class, discuss things that demonstrate love which may not seem to at first. For instance, taking good care of a pet shows your love for it. If your family doctor gives you a call to see if your medicine is working, is that a kind of love? How about when your parents say no to something they think might be dangerous, even if you want to do it? Is that love or are they just being stupid?
3. Take two of the characters out of the play and put them in another location. For instance, take Celia and Amy and put them . . . where? In a veterinarian's office? Running into each other at the shopping centre? Beside the road where their cars have just crashed into each other? . . . Now improvise a scene. How do they act? How would they speak to each other? How would each respond to the situation? Here are some other interesting combinations – or you can create your own.
 - Dad and Tom Foolery in a dentist's waiting room
 - Crazy Auntie Jo and Mum trying on clothes at a sale
 - Ben and Celia at a rock concert
 - Sandra and Ben forced to work together on a project, such as dissecting a frog
4. For the rest of the day, notice ways different people have of demonstrating their love for you and for each other. Write a brief essay or journal entry about what you observe.



The Love Confusion



Dad It's a little hard to share one . . .

Tom Foolery Sorry, low-budget show. Good luck to you – we know you love your daughter!

(MUM and DAD smile weakly as they struggle to fit on the same stool. DAD finally gives up and stands behind MUM as TOM FOOLERY moves on to CELIA.)

Tom Foolery Ladies and gentlemen, please say hello to Amy's friend from school, Celia!

(Applause)

Celia Oh my gosh, I SO can't believe I'm actually on TV! This is SO exciting – how do I look? Does my hair look bouncy – do my teeth look white – is my forehead shiny?

Tom Foolery Hold still, Celia, let me use your forehead as a mirror to check my own hair! *(pretends to be seeing his reflection in CELIA's forehead)*

Celia Tom, get lost! You're so mean!

(waving to imaginary camera) Hi, everybody from McBeal Secondary – I love you all! Do you love me!

(back to Tom) Do I look OK, really? You never did say.

Tom Foolery Celia, you look just as good as . . . you are inside.

Celia That is SO sweet of you to say! *(realising that TOM may not exactly have paid her a compliment)* Hey wait . . .

Tom Foolery Moving right along, please welcome Amy's friend since kindergarten, Sandra!

(Applause)

Sandra Hi, everybody!