

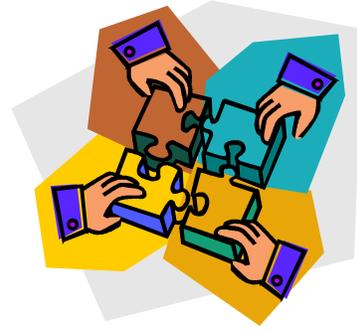
BE A “PEACE” OF THE PUZZLE!



Writing is . . . Child’s Play!

Workshop Discussion & Study Guide for Teachers

Be a “Peace” of the Puzzle!



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Our **Writing Is...Child's Play! Workshops** provide an intensive writing master class that demonstrates places to look for writing ideas and introduces a development method for getting story concepts organized. The workshop builds enthusiasm for creative writing by presenting examples of different types of writing by other children. This interactive “informance” culminates with the audience helping write a group generated story and seeing it performed!

With our exciting **BE A PEACE OF THE PUZZLE Program**, we are incorporating the themes of **tolerance, empathy, and peace** into our educational workshops - taking this successful format and infusing it with a peaceful flavor!

Much of the focus of our writing motivation will be towards encouraging the children to tell us about **their own unique experiences developing empathy for others, observing or practicing tolerance in trying situations, and participating in peaceful solutions to silly and serious problems alike**. Also, the stories that will be performed during the session will include dramatizations of **writings from children all over the country finding peace in their lives**.

Not only do these workshops provide inspiration for children’s creativity, but they also encourage them to look outside themselves - to **share, understand, and celebrate how children from all backgrounds develop tolerance and empathy**.

What to write? What to write?

Sometimes even the very best writers get a case of writer's block. The hardest part about writing is often just deciding what to write about. Here are a few tips from Child's Play about where you can find the best stories.

Have FUN!

At Child's Play we think this is the most important thing to do. Don't worry about finding the perfect idea or writing the greatest story. Just relax and write about whatever you like. The best stories are always the ones that were the most fun to write.

Write What You Know

The best place to start looking for ideas is in your very own life. "But my life is boring," you say? If you think about it, there are great stories hiding in everyone's everyday life - even yours! Just think about all the times you hear and tell stories everyday . . . about something unusual that happened, about something funny that a friend of yours said, the sky's the limit. Your family, your friends, your school, even you yourself are all excellent places to find inspiration for stories.

If You Want to Know, ASK

If you still don't have any ideas, try asking questions. Ask your grandparents how they met. Ask your friends about the funniest thing they've ever seen. You can even ask yourself questions. Ask yourself what your dog would say if it could talk or how things would be different if people could fly. You'll find that most questions will be answered with stories. All you have to do is write them down.

Details, Details

Asking questions can also help you get details about your story. Details are very important. They help us paint pictures with our words, and can change the whole story. Just think about the difference between a story set in a green, sunny forest and one in a dark, haunted forest. Details help us know why things in the story happen and make every story more interesting and fun to read.

Use Your Imagination

What it all comes down to is that you have to use your imagination to write a good story. Imagine what a dragon would act like or how an alien would feel here on earth. Even when you write a realistic story, your imagination is your most valuable tool. Imagine what would happen if you got lost and couldn't find your way home or what you'll be like when you grow up. Imagination is what will bring your ideas to life.

BE A “PEACE” OF THE PUZZLE!

BE A PEACE OF THE PUZZLE is one of our favorite programs at Child's Play Touring Theatre. Providing a stage for children to explore and develop empathy and tolerance, students are encouraged to submit stories and poems that illustrate **how they observed or created peaceful solutions in their own personal lives and the world around them.**

What should children write about?

BE A PEACE OF THE PUZZLE is a program that inspires children to look at their own lives, and to explore how understanding and empathy for the lives of others help build a stronger world. In line with this theme, we are particularly looking for stories that **celebrate peaceful solutions to problems in everyday experiences, challenges, family life, hopes and dreams.**

Here are some initial suggestions. These are not limitations, just starting points!

- Making new friends
- Having an argument/getting along afterwards
- Getting to know someone very different from you
- Standing up for something or someone you believe in
- Looking at the world through someone else's eyes
- What does your 'ideal' world look like?
- If everyone had to act really mean or nice for a day, what would happen?
- If there were a big problem in your life right now, how would you fix it?

Review: Begin by discussing the workshop and demonstration pieces that were performed.

What was your favorite story or poem?

What did the story tell you about the person who wrote it?

How was the story the same as your own experiences? How was it different?

Why did you like it?

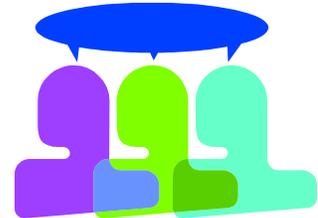
What do you think makes a good story or poem?



Discuss the story creation process that the Child's Play actors used at the end of the workshop.

Brainstorming: The key to a good story is brainstorming. Encourage your students to write down every idea that comes to mind. They'll have a better chance of getting the best idea if they have several to choose from.

Discuss ideas for stories that tell something about the children's own lives, and feelings. Use the story theme suggestions above to give children some starting points.



Writing a story as a Class: We have supplied a six square story box. Use this box to write a story with your class. Tell the students to give you suggestions for setting, characters, obstacles, and solutions. Just follow the story box on the next page and you are sure to send in a unique and creative story to Child's Play!

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Place | Who | Adjectives |
| Ask students to give suggestions about the place or setting of the story. | Ask students to give suggestions for the characters. | Ask students to give adjectives that can describe the place or the characters |
| Want | But (obstacle) | Solution |
| Choose one character and ask the characters to give him a want. What do they want in the story? | Ask the students to give an obstacle to the main character. They want _____ but.....obstacle. | Ask the students to give a great 'GREEN' solution to the problem/obstacle in the story. |

Story Box

Stories!

Tree Saver

Written by: Sunny Balkin, 4th grade
Holtzville, NY



Jim is a lumberjack with a secret: he doesn't like to cut down trees. Instead, he plants them. When his lumberjack parents catch Jim in the act, it's up to him to show his parents the joy of planting.

Younger Students

Discussion questions:

What are ways Jim could convince people other than his parents to plant more trees?
If you were a tree, what would you say to a lumberjack to change his mind about cutting you down?

Activities:

Play lumberjack tag! Have two students be lumberjacks and one be the planter. All other students are trees and stay still. When the lumberjacks tag a tree, that student sits down until the planter tags them to grow again. They have to count to 20 before they stand up. Watch as the students see how much easier it is to cut down trees than grow new ones.

Older Students

Discussion questions:

(Biology tie-in) What roles do trees fill in our ecosystem? Why do we cut down trees in the first place?
How important is planting new trees to our world?

Activities:

Have students pick a favorite kind of tree, draw pictures, and make a presentation to the class about the traits of that tree: How big they grow, how long they live, where they grow, what color they are, what animals live in them, etc. Put all the pictures together to make a class "forest".

Shame on You!

By Gia Saraceno, 5th Grade

Patti is very passionate about recycling. When Patti sees Leon, she stands up to what she believes in and tells Leon the harsh truth about what the future will look like in ten years if people do not take recycling seriously.

Younger Students

Questions for discussion:

Do you recycle at your own home? What are some items that you can recycle every day?

Activity:

Take a walk on your school's campus or around the block and challenge the students to pick up as many pieces of trash as they can. Remember to use appropriate hand washing procedure when you return.

Older Students

Questions for Discussion:

Have you ever told anyone who wasn't recycling how wrong it is to litter? How would you confront them and tell them about ways to recycling? What can we do as individuals to make a difference for the planet now?

Activity:

The time to recycle is now! Split the class in 2+ groups and have a relay race! Lay some garbage on the floor. Make sure the garbage contains batteries, paper, aluminum cans (please be careful when handling these items) cardboard and plastic bottles. Each team will have to pick up one item off the floor and recycle it in the right bin. The team that wins is the team that a.) Finishes the race first and b.) Has all the items in the correct recycling bins. If a player puts an item in the wrong bin, the teacher will tell the player to take the item out of the bin and return it to the garbage pile. The player will have to return to his team, get in the back of the line and have another chance to redeem him/herself.

Go Green Rap

By Campers at Child's Play



Theater Camp in Irving, TX

A group of Aliens decide to come to Earth and tell the Earthlings how they feel about the destruction of the planet from pollution. The Aliens are upset about the Earthlings behavior and decide to express their strong feelings through a quick witted rap.

Younger Students

Questions for Discussion:

If you were an Alien what planet would you be from? What activities would you like to do?

Activity:

Draw a picture of yourself as an Alien. What color would you be? Would you have three eyes or two noses?

Older Students

Questions for Discussion:

What types of things do Earthlings do to harm their planet? What advice would you give Earthlings on how to save their planet?

Activity:

Write your Own Rap! Imagine that you are an Alien visiting Earth and write a rap about what you do and see. Here are some lines from our *Go Green Rap* to help you get started:

*Turn off the water when you brush your teeth
To protect all the fishies who swim in the reef
All these crazy earthlings won't keep their earth clean
Don't mean to be mean but you're making us scream*



Anger

By Dawn Ferreri, 7th Grade



Younger Students

Questions for Discussion:

What makes you angry? What do you do when you are angry? What is a good way to calm yourself down?

Activity:

Ask students to lay on their backs on the floor and place their hand on their stomach. Instruct them to take slow deep breaths counting out how long they should breathe in and out. Ask them to relax the different parts of their bodies individually (Relax your feet, now add your legs, your hands, etc.). Explain that using your breath and relaxing your body is a good way to control anger.

Older Students

Questions for Discussion:

Have you ever lost a good friend, or hurt someone because you were angry with them? What can you do to prevent yourself from getting angry?

Anger is a huge beast
It changes form with each moment
And lives off our emotions.
Its roar is like that of the devil.
It is truly evil.
Each moment you get angrier,
It gets much stronger.
The more hatred you show, the more it possesses you.

Its arms reach out and grab you.
When you least expect it, it takes hold of you.
It captures your sense of judgment,
And destroys your inhibitions.
It causes you to lose your temper,
And your close friends too.

Activity:

Have students stand across from a partner and take turns counting to 10. As they count to 5 they get increasingly louder when they say their number. Stop the group at the number 5. Tell them to start getting quieter as they continue to count. When they get to the number 10 they should be speaking in a whisper. When the exercise is finished ask the students how their body felt when they were screaming. Were they tense and or angry? Were their bodies rigid? Then ask how they felt when they were whispering. Were they calmer, more relaxed, happier? Explain that feelings will affect our whole body and that relaxing and taking deep breaths can help control anger and help them live a long and healthier life.

Dusty Grime

Written by: Scott R
Kirkwood, MO

S1- 1 (soft)

S2-2 (louder)

S1-3 (louder)

S2-4 (screaming)

S1-5 (screaming)

S2-6 (screaming)

S1-7 (normal voice)

S2-8 (quieter)

S1-9 (whisper)

S2-10 (low whisper)



Dusty Grime thinks he is a cool kid. He thinks littering and polluting is cool. He thinks being generally dirty and uncaring is the epitome of cool. It's up to Mother Nature and her champion Captain Earth to teach Dusty how to clean up his act.

Younger Students

Discussion Question:

Mother Nature and Captain Earth can't stop everyone from littering or polluting. What are some things you can say or do to remind your friends and family to be kind to our environment?

Activities:

Captain Earth is not the only Superhero in Mother Nature's employ. Have your students make up their own environmentally conscious superhero, and draw a picture of him. Does he plant trees? Save energy? Put out fires?

Older Students

Discussion Questions:

Why might Dusty think his behavior is "cool"? Talk to your students about what they think "cool" behavior is.

Activities:

Have your students make an advertising campaign for the "New Cool". They can come up with slogans and pictures that advertise what they think cool behavior is. Hang them in the hallways for all the students to see!



A New Life

By Gabriel Castro, Grade 8

Bensenville, IL

Juan Carlos finds himself in a very serious situation when he decides to join a gang in Chicago. He begins stealing from innocent people, skipping school, and hanging out with very violent gang members. When Juan Carlos decides to leave the gang, his life is threatened and makes the choice to call the police. Juan Carlos was lucky he was able to change his life, but even though Juan Carlos' story ends happily the problem continues to haunt our streets.

Younger Students

Discussion Questions:

Have you ever felt scared or in a situation you didn't think was safe? What can you do to get help in these situations? Who could you talk to?

Activity:

Find an open space and ask one student to volunteer. Place the student at the extreme end of one room and opposite them designate a spot as the goal (you can do this by making an 'X' on the floor with tape) Blindfold this child and then proceed to put obstacles in his/her way (these can be chairs, mats, or even coats that are laid on the floor). Let the class know that they must stand at the 'X' and give instructions to the volunteer on how to navigate their way across the room without touching any of the obstacles. If an obstacle is touched they must start again. At the end of the activity ask students the following questions.

What was difficult about this activity?

What worked? What didn't work?

What do we need to do as a class to work together and be there for each other if we have problems?

Older Students

Discussion Questions:

Have you ever been in a situation where you were uncomfortable and didn't feel safe? How can you avoid these situations? Who could you talk to about these situations?

Activity:

Have each student choose a partner. Teach every student the support pose- one foot in front of the other, legs bent, palms open. Teach every student the following commands:

S1: Ready

S2: Ready

S1: Falling

S2: Fall

Instruct student 2 (S2) to get in the support pose, Instruct student 1 (S1) to stand in front of (S2). Have S2 place his/her hands on S1's back lightly. Have the students perform the commands. After S2 says "Fall" S1 will allow him/herself to fall back and be caught by S2. It is important that you analyze the maturity level of your class before completing this exercise. As the students become more comfortable they can step back farther from each other. When the activity is over ask the following questions:

What was difficult about this activity? What was easy?

What did you learn about trusting your classmate?

So there you have it. The Child's Play Touring Theatre 2010 Writing Workshop. We've left a few surprises out there, and depending on the age range of our audience some of these works may vary from workshop to workshop. We are making a concerted effort to engage our audience as much as possible with age appropriate material.

Contact Us

If you have any questions or comments about the workshop or the follow-up materials, please feel free to contact us at Child's Play Touring Theatre, 773-235-8911, 800-353-3402 or via e-mail [at cptt@cptt.org](mailto:cptt@cptt.org). 5097 N. Elston Ave. 203 Chicago, IL 60630

Good Luck and Good Writing!