

## Drama Workshop Plan: ages 4 – 7yrs (approx. 1 hour)

The following workshop is a structure that can be added to, elaborated upon, and words changed according to the needs and understanding of your group and which particular elements evoke interest and discussion among the children. It is important to pause after each section of the workshop for a group discussion to illicit the children's ideas about the themes of slavery, such as being told what to do without reward, power and control.

Each section has directions, explanations, possible wording and ideal timings. Those in italics are for group leaders to think about themselves. It is written as an aid to leaders who may not have used drama as an educational tool before, therefore some sections may seem more detailed to those that do use drama already.

Resources: A large sheet of paper, coloured pens.

**Introduction:** Today we are going to be thinking about slavery. Who knows what slavery is? What do you understand by the term slavery?

**Rene Cassin definition: 'Slavery: being forced to work without pay, under the threat of violence and being unable to walk away.'**

*You can choose whether or not to read the above definition to the children or to use your own words, or better still a combination of what you discover from the children in your group.*

We will be using games and part of the story of Joseph to think about slavery, but because we will be working and thinking together we need to make sure everyone feels safe and comfortable.

**Group Contract:** Stand in a circle and hold hands. The leader sends a 'pulse' around the group (squeeze of the hand next to you and then that person squeezes the hand next to them and so on until it gets back to the leader) making the following statements: 'We will look after ourselves!' (one pulse) 'We will look after everyone else!' (another pulse) and 'We will look after the space!' (another pulse)

**Warm Up:** Stand in a circle and ask each person in the group to say their name and do a movement that the whole group then copy. Do not go round the circle (as this can cause anxiety in the waiting) but allow children to do this when they are ready. Just keep a note of who has and who hasn't done it. If someone is too shy to do a movement then make one up for them that the group can copy.

(Introduction contract and warm up 15 mins.)

### **Games to begin thinking about the theme of the session:**

**The fishes and the hungry whale:** One person is selected to be the hungry whale and stand in the middle of the space. The rest of the children are fishes and stand at one end of the space. The aim is that the fish have to try and get to the other side of the space without being eaten (caught) by the whale. If one of the fishes is caught they have to stand where they were caught and pretend to be seaweed that is rooted to the spot, but can use arms to also try and capture the fish. The winner is the fish that, after having gone back and forth, has survived the whale and the seaweed.

**Leader questions:** Who has the power in this game? Why? What did you feel when you felt as though you were powerful?

**Can you do this?:** Ask the group to find a space in the room. The leader then calls out different directives (stand on one leg, crouch on the floor, spin in a circle etc.) After each command is met the leader encourages the group to clap each other and themselves. After three or four rounds, the leader then calls out more commands, but this time does not clap or encourage anyone else to clap.

**Leader questions:** What was it like to do as you are told and be clapped for doing it? What was it like to do what you were told and not get a clap? How did it make you feel?

(Games: 10 mins)

### **Back to the circle.**

#### **Tell the story of Joseph in slavery:**

##### **Part one**

Jacob and Rachel lived in Canaan. They were wealthy farmers and had worked hard to make a success of their farm land. Joseph was the youngest of the family's ten sons. He was also Jacob's favourite son and he got special treatment because of this. His brothers were very jealous and wanted to get rid of him, so they took the chance to sell him to some spice traders passing their farm, who were on their way to Egypt. After days of uncomfortable travelling, Joseph found himself at a slave market in the middle of Egypt. He was alone and he was very scared. He was sold for money to a very rich and important man called Potiphar who worked for the king of Egypt. Joseph worked within Potiphar's house, and he was told what to do, when to get up, when to eat, when to sleep and even what to think. He worked very hard to make sure that Potiphar and his family had everything they needed. He was woken up at any time of the night or day just to serve the family. But he was not ever paid for his work. He wasn't even thanked. Sometimes he didn't have enough to eat.

**Leader Questions:** How do you think Joseph felt? How do you think Potiphar felt?

**Group Statues:** Ask the children to find a space within the room. Explain that they are going to make a statue of the feelings that they think Joseph may have felt being in slavery.

Count from 5 to 0 and by 0 all children should hold their statues still. Walk around the room and explain that when you touch someone on the shoulder, they can unfreeze, and give you one word saying how they feel. Go to several children or all if you feel you have time.

Then do the same process but this time using the character of Potiphar. How might he have felt being a slave owner?

*(Use some of the ideas that they had having listened to the story to guide them. Encourage the children to think about how they might hold their body with this feeling where their head might be, how their facial expression is, what they might do with their arms and hands etc. For example, if sad, body curled up, head down a frown on their face. If angry, body tense, shoulders up, hands clenched etc. If powerful, shoulders back, body open, head up etc)*

Choose two or three children to show the rest of the group their statues as both Joseph and Potiphar. Think with the group about how their body is showing their emotions. Ask the group to think about what kinds of emotions were shown.

(20 mins)

### **Return to circle for discussion:**

Recap on some of the thoughts and feelings of both Joseph's and Potiphar's position. Explain that Joseph found his way out of slavery eventually and became a powerful man in his own right. But he never forgot what it was like to be a slave.

Remind the group that the story of Joseph happened a long time ago. Do you think that people can be slaves now? Sadly, they can. Talk with the group about how there is still such a thing as slavery around the world and what form it takes.

### **Reflection Time:**

*(Used to allow children time and space to think and feel and put those thoughts and feelings outside of themselves.)*

Lay out a large sheet of paper and ask the children to draw pictures or write down thoughts about the session they have just done. Allow time when everyone has finished to let all the children look at each other's work.



(10mins)

**Return to the circle:**

Hold hands and send a final 'pulse' around the circle to say thank you and well done for their work in the session.

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*Susanna Kester (Rosenberg) is a much experienced Drama Therapist, Clinical Supervisor and Theatre Practitioner, working within schools, hospitals, and Jewish community settings. In parallel with her eighteen-year career as a therapist in private practice with children of all ages and adults, she has also facilitated social and educational drama workshops around Jewish values at Finchley Reform Synagogue, and is currently working with the youngest members of that community.*