

CORNERSTONE 2018 RESOURCE

Theater Specialty Track 2

AUTHOR(S):	Melissa Shaw
SUMMARY:	In this workshop, Fellows will explore Theater of the Oppressed techniques, delve into social justice themes, and focus in on personal experience to create short scenes. - <i>Submitted by Melissa Shaw</i>
TOPIC(S):	Social Justice, Theater
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	Fellows will become grounded in the fundamentals of Theater of the Oppressed techniques and take stock of their own relationships to personal truths around injustices.
AUDIENCE:	20-24 participants, Fellows ages 18-22
TIMING:	90 minutes
APPENDICES:	None
MATERIALS NEEDED:	1 blindfold per fellow, 4 additional chairs to the number of participants, and 1 table
SET-UP DETAILS:	This class should take place in a space big enough to hold a half circle of chairs and hold an open playing space.

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

10 minutes- *overview and discussion-*

Speaking Truth to Power – In the spirit of risk-taking, this session is all about learning how to utilize a theater technique that was created to fight oppressions and support people who are “daring” enough to speak truth to power. What does this mean to you? Where in Jewish history have Jews had to “speak up” or interrupt injustices? Why is this important?

Theater of the Oppressed is a technique to help empower us to action.

5 minutes - *Columbian Hypnosis* - a warm up game between an ‘A’ partner and a ‘B’ partner where the ‘A’ partner holds their hand 6 inches in front of the ‘B’ partner’s face. The ‘A’ partner controls ‘B’'s movements. After 1 minute, they switch roles. After everyone has played both roles we discuss how it felt and what it has to do with power dynamics.

10 minutes - *Tableaux Roulette* - Participants will become comfortable creating stage pictures in this rapid-fire theater game. One person begins on stage holding a position. Another classmate jumps up to complete the picture in any way that they like. They hold the pose so the rest of the “spectators” (audience) can see it and take it in. Then, the original person sits down and a new person joins the second creating a new picture. This activity can create countless combinations of gestures, stage pictures and potential stories.

20 Minutes - *Great Game of Power* - An interactive scene building juggernaut that is fun, thought-provoking, and promotes risk taking! The game starts with participants confronted with a neutral display of 4 chairs and 1 table. The fellows will be asked to arrange the chairs in such a way that ONE of the chairs must be arranged to have the highest status over all the rest of the chairs *and* the table. The purpose of this exercise is for us to gain vocabulary around power - what it looks like and feels like.

After having seen a few iterations on the trope, we will settle on one and move on to building round two. In round two, we will ask for volunteers to insert themselves into the scene to lower and raise statuses and help drive the conversation forward.

5 Minutes - *Sound Seek* - Fellows will focus on a sound that reminds them of a time they experienced oppression. They will each put on a blindfold and create their sound. They will be asked to move toward the other sounds that they think sound like their own. When they find their “affinity group” they will remain together

40 minutes - *Scene Creation and Forum* - Fellows will be walked through a process of taking their experience of an injustice/oppression and creating a still picture (tableaux) of it with the help of their new team members. Once everyone has built a stage picture that typifies their experience, in small groups fellows will work as an ensemble to create a short play that takes us through the crux of the conflict.

After one play per group is created, we will watch them and then choose one for a deeper reflection. Fellows will take turns jumping into the action to show us what they might do differently if it was their turn to speak truth to power.