

Sock Puppets *Art Track 1*

AUTHOR(S):	Daniel Abramson
TOPIC (S)	Storytelling, Young Children
SUMMARY	Inspired by the transformative approaches to early childhood education modelled by Jim Henson and Fred Rogers, we will cut, sew, glue, and paint our way through this workshop experimenting with ways that child-like joy and wonder can transform the mundane into the magical. A simple sock can become the hero of an epic story played out in the transformed world of a cardboard box puppet theatre.
GOALS:	Participants will understand how to tap into creativity and imagination using simple materials that are available at little or no cost. Participants will also explore the positive impacts of cultivating a sense of radical amazement in everyday moments.
AUDIENCE:	Younger campers (8-10 years) This program can be scaled to accommodate small or large groups.
TIMING:	75 minutes
APPENDICES:	<p>The Muppets Make Puppets¹</p> <p>How to make puppets with Jim Henson (1969) https://youtu.be/AC440k6iByA</p> <p>Grown-ups see Mr. Snuffleupagus for the first time https://youtu.be/BtemfoJ-WI</p> <p>Mural (How are you feeling) https://app.mural.co/t/morehdaniel4085/m/morehdaniel4085/1615769043162/88cda59e9d25852d7c3bfa7491c10b5f5f6ab8d9</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ayin_and_Yesh</p> <p>Padlet with Puppet and Creativity resources</p>
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<p>The materials listed are general suggestions. You can be creative and use whatever recycled materials or craft supplies you wish. If you have access to foam, felt, fabric, clay, wood or other materials, you could use those as well.</p> <p>Yarn, felt, socks, polyester stuffing, wooden spoons, paint, felt, popsicle sticks, google eyes, styrofoam balls, plastic bottles, scissors</p>
SET-UP DETAILS:	Arts and Crafts room (Alternatively a kit with lots of supplies can be made so that the program can be done in other locations)

¹ "The Muppets Make Puppets: How to Create and ... - Amazon.com." <https://www.amazon.com/Muppets-Make-Puppets-Create-Operate/dp/1563057085>. Accessed 10 Mar. 2021.

SESSION TIMELINE

- 00:00 - 00:05 - Introductions
- 00:05 - 00:10 - How are you feeling activity ([Mural](#))
- 00:10 - 00:20 - Finding inspiration ([Padlet](#)) & What's in Your Bunk
- 00:20 - 00:25 - Digital Puppet Theater (for remote presentation), or Sketching Silliness (in-person)
- 00:25 - 01:00 - Creating the puppets
- 01:00 - 01:10 - Show and tell
- 01:10 - 01:15 - Brainstorming ways to adapt the program to bring it back to camp (or other learning environment)

SESSION OUTLINE:

00:00 - 00:05 - Introductions

00:05 - 00:10 - How are you feeling activity ([Mural](#))

On the MURAL, participants create a sticky note by double-clicking, then add their name, and move the note to a position on the grid that indicates how they are feeling (Creative vs. Receptive and Curious vs. Confident) If time permits, this activity might be revisited at the end of the session to understand how participants' feelings may have shifted as a result of the activity. **Note: There is no better place to be on the grid at a given moment, the intention is simply to have participants reflect on their feelings as they experience creative activities.

00:10 - 00:20 - Finding inspiration ([Padlet](#)) & What's in Your Bunk

Facilitators are encouraged to explore and re-make this padlet including their own favourite artists and interests. The idea is to create a repository of inspiring people, texts, strategies for exploration.

On this padlet page, participants can independently navigate to find interesting articles and ideas. Alternatively, the facilitator might provide a more guided navigation towards specific materials. If a specific medium is going to be used, the participants might spend time on the padlet learning a technique, if the goals for a particular group are more about exploring Jewish approaches to creation and creativity, then different entries can be highlighted and engaged with.

Participants also use this time to create a list of the different materials that they have in a bunk, artroom, or at home (or other place) that might be used to create their puppets. This also provides an opportunity to read or watch the story "Something from Nothing" which might inspire participants to think creatively about the potential of materials around them.

00:20 - 00:25 - Digital Puppet Theater (for remote presentation), or Sketching Silliness (in-person)

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/12vZl0w5S8CF8-a8ulZ9naM4FT9f7rAngYgLbpafyqFM/edit?usp=sharing>

Participants use the digital tools to create puppets and scenes. The intent is to create a low-stakes fun way to initiate creative thinking. It is most important to create an open, supportive atmosphere so that participants can feel free to create without worry of judgement or evaluation.

If this session is conducted in person, participants might do “Sketching Silliness” where they are invited to create wild and silly puppets and characters on paper. This practice is like creating a storyboard for an imagined puppet show.

00:25 - 01:00 - Creating the puppets

Participants use this time to create puppets from the materials that they have on hand (remotely or in person) If done remotely, breakout rooms can be created for participants who might want to work together, or for people who are working with similar materials. Music can be played in the background to foster a fun atmosphere digitally or in person.

01:00 - 01:10 - Show and tell (puppet show!)

Participants are invited to show their creations or to reflect on the creative process itself. With younger participants, showing the creations or using the program as an opportunity to introduce a connected drama/storytelling activity could be ideal. With older campers or staff, time spent discussing the value of creativity could be a useful point for reflection.

01:10 - 01:15 - Brainstorming ways to adapt the program to bring it back to camp (or other learning environment)

BRINGING IT BACK TO CAMP & SHIFTING TO IN PERSON:

The Padlet page offers many resources. Some are digital, and some are available in print form. Most of the activities can easily be re-worked for effective use in person. You might read one of Piven’s books for inspiration or print some images of puppets. The advantage of in-person learning is that participants can dive right into the creation, and the other resources can be chosen as needed to foster reflection. In distance learning, the digital resources can be shared as inspiration and then participants can create with whatever materials are accessible.

TEXTS AND RESOURCES

Eli Talk - Lin Batsheva Kahn. Attach and Leap: Creativity and the Good Inclination

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEOLvtlGngE>

Bone Button Borscht read by Barbara Budd

<https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/tuesday-dalhousie-investigation-vatican-nuns-speed-dreidel-and-more-1.2902561/bone-button-borscht-a-seasonal-reading-by-barbara-budd-1.2902562>

Lunch Doodles with Mo Willems

<https://youtu.be/RmzjCPQv3y8>

Something from Nothing by Phoebe Gilman on Jake's Story Time

<https://youtu.be/V-NzGYBM830>

Creating with Trial and Error by Hanoch Piven

<https://youtu.be/l8fEyNmsmEY>

Life's like a movie, write your own ending. Keep believing, keep pretending.

The most sophisticated people I know - inside they are all children.

“[Kids] don't remember what you try to teach them. They remember what you are.”

— *Jim Henson, It's Not Easy Being Green: And Other Things to Consider*

“I don't know exactly where ideas come from, but when I'm working well ideas just appear. I've heard other people say similar things - so it's one of the ways I know there's help and guidance out there. It's just a matter of our figuring out how to receive the ideas or information that are waiting to be heard.”

— *Jim Henson*

“Life is meant to be fun, and joyous, and fulfilling.”

— *Jim Henson, It's Not Easy Being Green: And Other Things to Consider*

“No time is wasted time”

— *Jim Henson, It's Not Easy Being Green: And Other Things to Consider*

“Yes, its one of the basic truths of the universe,...Things don't disappear. They just change, and change and change again.”

— *Jim Henson*

“We see with our eyes. We know with our hearts. Outside...Inside.”

— *Jim Henson*

CORNERSTONE 2021 RESOURCE

"Standing eye to eye with being as being, we realize that we are able to look at the world with two faculties — with reason and with wonder. Through the first we try to explain or to adapt the world to our concepts, through the second we seek to adapt our minds to the world.

— *Abraham Joshua Heschel*

"Wonder goes beyond knowledge. We do not doubt that we doubt, but we are amazed at our ability to doubt, amazed at our ability to wonder. He who is sluggish will berate doubt; he who is blind will berate wonder. Doubt may come to an end; wonder lasts forever. Wonder is a state of mind in which we do not look at reality through the latticework of our memorized knowledge, in which nothing is taken for granted. Spiritually we cannot live by merely reiterating borrowed or inherited knowledge. Inquire of your soul what does it know, what does it take for granted. It will tell you only no-thing is taken for granted; each thing is a surprise; being is unbelievable. We are amazed at seeing anything at all, amazed not only at particular values and things but at the unexpectedness of being as such, at the fact that there is being at all."

— *Abraham Joshua Heschel*

Being creative is part of being human. Everyone is creative. Each person's creativity finds different form, that's true; but without creativity of some kind, I doubt that we'd get through many of the problems that life poses.

Rogers, Fred. Life's Journeys According to Mister Rogers (p. 52). Hachette Books. Kindle Edition.

Sometimes it takes years and years of experimentation to realize who we can be... what we can make of what has come to us. No one would have ever predicted that Mahatma Gandhi would become the person to dramatically change the life of people in India. He even went to England when he was young to explore whether it might be better to be an Englishman. But look how he put it all together later on. Maybe it's happened to you already when you can actually integrate what you've learned with your own personality—when you can actually use your education to be who you want to be, to choose out of that mixed bag of explorations what you want to call yourself. That's when your education adds an extra measure of excitement!

Rogers, Fred. Life's Journeys According to Mister Rogers (pp. 114-115). Hachette Books. Kindle Edition.

As work grows out of play, an attitude toward work grows with it—an attitude that may persist through our workaday life. That attitude can have a lot to do with how we accept challenges, how we cope with failures, and whether we can find in the jobs we do, the inner fulfillment that makes working worthwhile, in and of itself.

Rogers, Fred. Life's Journeys According to Mister Rogers (p. 117). Hachette Books. Kindle Edition.

When people help us to feel good about who we are, they are really helping us to love the meaning of what we create in this life. It seems to me that the most essential element in the development of any creation must be love—a love that begins in the simple expressions of care for a little child, and, once received, goes on to mature into responsible feelings about ourselves and others.

Rogers, Fred. Life's Journeys According to Mister Rogers (p. 42). Hachette Books. Kindle Edition.