

Eco-theatre

Age/Grade Range

- Age 11 and up

Group Size

- Up to 25

Time

- Prep time: 30 minutes
- Set-up: 5-10 minutes
- Activity: 1-2 hrs

Materials

- Scripts for the Project Waste Reducer play
- Dress-up clothes (the more ridiculous, the better)
- Props (a recycling bin, a garbage bin, three sets of plastic dishes, a few plastic bags, some empty yogurt containers, a t-shirt, a 'table' and 3' chairs,' 2 backpacks or schoolbags...) None of these are essential but help the kids get into it.

Set-Up

1. Print off scripts, enough for everyone in the scene to have a copy
2. Clear a large space.

Intro

1. What is eco-theatre? An answer could be "Theatre that explores environmental themes and often tries to convey a message about what we can do to help our planet." It's a more engaging way of getting these messages across; better than a lecture.
2. Mention 4 really important things in theatre in general:
 - a. The body (the whole body must be engaged in what we are doing on stage)
 - b. The voice (we must project our voices so everyone can hear)
 - c. Energy (we must put energy into our voice and actions. The energy we have on stage is what affects the audience)
 - d. The connection between each other (we have to support our fellow actors. Theatre is really about the whole team. Also, if you connect with your fellow actors on stage, it creates a special energy, essential to make the play engaging for the audience.)



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Topics

- Waste

Objective

- Learn about environmental issues in a fun, creative and engaging way.



Warm-up

Ball of Energy game.

This quick exercise is to show the importance of being focused and connected with your fellow actors. Everyone stands in a circle. The leader explains that they have a ball of energy in their hands (it's imaginary), and they're going to send it across the circle. To send it to someone, they look the person in the eyes and clap their hands while pushing the 'ball' away from them, towards the other person. To receive it, the person claps while bringing the ball in towards their chest, and then they send it off to someone else. It's more fun the faster you go. To make it harder, you could have more than one ball going at once, or try it with people running around, but still staying focused on whoever has the 'ball.'

Physical and Vocal Warm-Up

For physical, just shaking different parts of the body or dancing around a little will do. For vocal, some basic tongue twisters, or have them pretend to chew gum loud. It can be pretty silly things.

Environmental Images

This is an excellent activity to get the kids' problem solving environmental issues. It's also a nice gentle step towards performing.

1. Divide the kids into groups of 3 or 4.
2. Each group's task is to come up with two different still images that they will make with their bodies (like frozen scenes).
3. The first image should represent a problem in the environment or a human action that is not sustainable.
4. The second image shows how they could fix the problem or an alternative to that non-sustainable action. One option is to have ready-made ideas of environmental issues on cards to hand out to each group. Air pollution, Littering, Water pollution, Human-started forest fires, Wasted energy, Oil spills, Overflowing landfill, etc. The group still has to come up with how they will represent the problem and how they will fix it.
5. Give the kids 5-10 minutes to come up with their images and practice them. Then have each group present their two images one after the other. Have the audience guess what the group is showing in their images. Let each group explain what they did after their turn.

The Play! Project Waste Reducer:

1. This simple eco-theatre play only has four characters. Divide the scenes so that the same characters will end up being played by multiple people.
2. The scenes are for 2-4 people. There are also different versions of some of the scenes (see the last few pages of script) to accommodate a different total number of kids. One or two of the middle scenes can even be taken out altogether for a smaller group, and the story will still make sense. Make seven groups (if using all the scenes) according to the number of people in each scene.
3. Give the kids time to go over their scenes a few times. Tell the kids they don't have to memorize their lines, unless you have a lot of time and are planning on presenting the play to an outside audience. Pull out the props and costumes and let them pick what they want.





4. Establish the 'stage' (you could pre-set it with the table and chairs) and have the groups come up and present in the order of the scenes. The rest of the group is the 'audience' when they're not performing.
5. Make sure everyone gets up to do a bow at the end; they're all world-class eco-actors now!

Debrief/ Evaluation:

Ask the kids what they thought about eco-theatre, what they learned, liked and thought could have been done differently. This helps them realize how the session impacted them and enables you as a presenter to improve the session for the next time you do it.

Modifications

- Try the Reason to Dream play.
- Write your play
- Or switch it up with a puppetry skit.

Print Outs

- Project Waste Reducer EcoTheatre Script
- Reason to Dream EcoTheatre Script

