



## Exploring individual movement and movement as a group

### Opening Ritual

Open the class with your favorite ritual/routine

### Physical Warm Up

**Touching the Sky:** Imagine that you are a tree. Let your arms become branches that grow until they reach up toward the sky. Your fingers are the leaves at the top of the tree, very high up, reaching, reaching toward the sun and the clouds. Feel the reaching all the way down your trunk. Your legs are reaching too. You are standing on your tiptoes, but your roots are still in the earth. You are stretching with your whole body.

**Rag Doll:** (great after "touching the sky") You are a rag doll. You don't really have any bones. You can stand up because you are full of stuffing, but you are loose and flexible. Turn side to side very gently and let your rag doll arms swing by your side. Let your rag doll head fall gently toward your chest, then roll it side to side, then in a full, slow circle. Take a step or two as the rag doll. Gently shake your rag doll legs as you move. Feel how loose they are. Now, bending slightly at the waist, let your torso slowly fall forward toward the ground. Your arms and head are loose and may sway gently as you just hang there. Now stand back up. Let any remaining tension flow out of you into the floor. You are loose and flexible.

### Focusing Warm-Up

**Beep:** Players stand in a circle. Each person turns his/her head to face the Player to his left. One person starts by turning his head to the right and saying, "Beep." The person next to him passes it along by turning his head to the right and saying "beep," then turning his head back to the left. As each person is "beeped" at, he turns his head to the right and says "beep." Players should anticipate the beeps and move more and more quickly. Until eventually, all Players are saying "beep" at the same time.

**Zip Zap Zop:** This is one of the most famous theater warm-up games. It combines quick thinking with fast movements. Before you play, practice jumping, clapping and pointing at the same time. (Okay, since you can't actually clap and point at the same time, practice jumping and clapping, and pointing right after you clap.) The second thing that you need to remember is the title of the game, in the right order: zip, zap, zop. Stand in a circle. One person starts by jumping, clapping and pointing to someone as she says, "zip." The person she points to jumps, claps, and points to someone else saying "zap." The person she points to then jumps, claps, and points to someone saying "zop." The person he points to then jumps, claps and points to someone saying, "zip." The game continues until someone gets out. If you don't say the right word, you're out. If it's not clear who you pointed to, you're out, so be sure to make eye contact and point directly at the person. If you pause or wait too long when it's your turn, you're out. When a person gets out, you may have a seat and help judge when others get out by breaking one or more of the rules. Variation: When Players get out, they can turn into "mines," by staying in their place, but crossing their arms over their chest. If a Player still in the game points to one of the "mines," he is out too.

### Group Bonding Repeat

Last session, we suggested an activity to try at home. Now we have a chance to play it.

If you did not send this home, that's alright. Children can make up their story if they do not know it.

**Story of Your Name:** One at a time in a circle, or in pairs if the group is large, players take turns telling the story of their names. If a player does not know the story, or if it is something they do not wish to share, they can lie!

Variations:

- Story of your pet's name
- Story of your nickname
- What you would want to name your children and why



## Skill Building Activity

The Space Walk is an invaluable drama activity that has nearly endless variations, and can be repeated over and over. During this game, students become aware of their bodies in relation to space and to each other. They also learn to "manipulate" space with their imaginations and bodies. They learn that space can become anything they wish it to be!

### Space Walk:

Establish clearly defined boundaries for the players to stay inside. Have Players move about the room, paying attention to the space around them. Keep walking. Only now pretend you are walking through pudding. Think about what it feels like and how your body would move through pudding. For example, you might move more slowly now because pudding is thicker than air.

After a while, pretend the space has turned into clouds.

Think about what it feels like, and how you might walk through clouds.

Now your environment has turned to honey. You are moving through honey, your feet sinking into it.

After a while, the space is filled with snow. Up to your ankles, now up to your knees. You are in a blizzard.

Suddenly, you reach a frozen pond. You walk out onto it. It's slippery. But you must cross!

The edge of the pond is made of mashed potatoes. They are sticking to you everywhere. Your boots are even getting filled with it.

You take one big step out of the mashed potatoes and now you are on the moon. What happened to how heavy you felt a minute ago? Now you seem light as air. Everything moves in slow motion.

What's that coming down out of the sky? It's popcorn! You are in a popcorn maker, popcorn whirls all around you. You can't find your way out.

Suddenly the white popcorn storm turns soft and fluffy and you are surrounded by feathers. You are walking on feathers. You can even lay down on the feathers if you like.

But something's wrong. You are slipping. The ground has turned to marbles.

They are everywhere, rolling and rolling under your feet. Try to walk on the marbles without tumbling down with them.

It's a good thing that it's getting muddy. At least now your feet will stick to the ground. But they are really sticking. The mud is so thick it might take off your shoes.

Wait, it's not mud. It's taffy. Which is even stickier than mud! But at least it might taste good. The more you try and get out of the taffy, the softer it becomes until you realize that it is cotton candy.

The soft and fluffy stuff that dreams are made of. You take a bite that dissolves in your mouth and you sink down to the ground in the soft pink candy that feels like a cloud.

**Contemplation questions:** Once children are sitting on the ground, ask them:

What happened during this activity?

What surprised you?

What did you notice?

How do you think actors can use this activity?

## Performance Activities

**Activity Pantomimes:** (Print and cut apart Activity Pantomimes, in Print and Play located in the last section of this book, and place the slips of paper in a hat.) One at a time, students take the stage and pick a pantomimed activity such as "knitting" out of the hat. Audience players have three guesses when the stage player has finished. Stage player is coached to use what we learned in Space Walk (mold space into whatever we want to create). You may choose to let everyone have two turns, or move on to another game if time allows.

**Bag of Titles:** (Print and cut apart Bag of Titles in Print and Play located in the last section of this book.) In small groups, players must silently create a piece with a specific title such as "The Missing Piece." Audience players must guess the title.



## Closing Ritual

End with your favorite closing ritual, and invite the children to "try this at home:"

**Animal Morph:** Decide what animal you would choose to become if you could not be a human being. Take a few minutes to think about the animal and see it in your mind. Pay attention to how it walks and moves, and the way it carries itself. Then stand and begin circling the room slowly, gradually transforming into that animal. You can use posture, walk, carriage and bodygestures to show what animal you are. Once the transformation is complete, gradually turn back into yourself once more.

