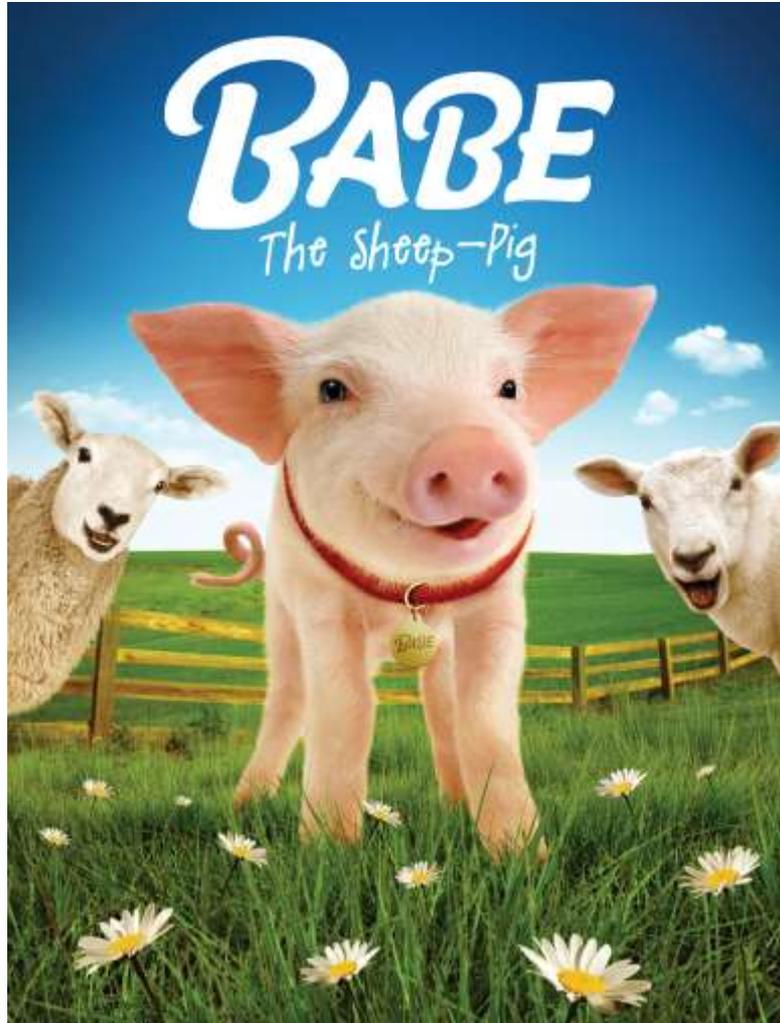


POLKA

Where theatre begins...



Babe, The Sheep-Pig Activity Pack

Dear Teacher/Parent

We do hope you enjoyed the show! Here are a few activities for you to do with your children after you have seen the performance. Most of these exercises are drama based and are good for developing speaking and listening skills.



Babe, the Sheep-Pig, adapted by David Wood from Dick King-Smith's novel, is for ages 5 - 11. Most of the exercises in this pack are written with Key Stage 2 in mind, but can be adapted for Key Stage 1.

Warm Ups:

The following warm up games are designed to get the class to work together and explore confidence building, spatial awareness and physical contact.

Person to Person:

Ask the class to begin walking around the space, keeping an awareness of others in the group. Explain that when you call out 'person to person!' they must get into pairs with the nearest person and stand with index fingers touching.

Then call out other body parts, which the children must touch together, e.g 'back to back', 'knee to knee' etc.

Next, ask them to separate and move around the room again until you next call out 'person to person!'.

The body parts can then mixed up e.g. 'hand to foot' or 'cheek to wrist' etc.

Encourage the children to work with as many different people as possible; they should not have the same partner twice.

Who's the Leader?:

Ask the group to stand in a circle. One person leaves the room while the group decide who is going to lead movements for the group to follow.

The person who left the room is invited back into the circle once the whole group has begun to follow the leader. All players look directly in front of them and do not make eye contact

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with the leader. The leader should adjust and change her movements with the whole group following. The person in the middle of the circle must try and decide who the leader is.

This game develops physicality and encourages the group to work as an ensemble. It's important that the group tries not to give the game away to the detective. They must feel the atmosphere and work with each other.

What are you doing?:

Ask the class to form a circle. Choose one volunteer to start. This person begins doing a mime of a farm job. For example feeding chickens, milking a cow, riding a horse, herding sheep or driving a tractor.

The next person enters the circle and asks 'What are you doing?' The first person says a different task to the one they were miming e.g if they were miming 'feeding the chickens' they might say 'milking a cow'. This is the task that the second person then takes up and acts out. The first person then leaves the circle.

This continues until everyone in the circle has had a turn.

If you have members of the group who might try to make their peers do something embarrassing, a good rule is to say that everyone should be prepared to act out their own suggestion because you might ask them to do this!

Yes Let's!:

Ask the group to begin moving around the space, making sure to use all areas of the room, not walking in circles and being aware of each other.

Start by calling out 'Let's all...' and add in a movement or action that relates to the play. For example:

'Let's all go to the country fair!'

The group will respond by saying 'Yes let's!' enthusiastically. They then begin to do the suggested action.

Once this has been established with various different commands relating to the story, you can allow the group to call out their own suggestions. You might need to remind everyone that it's very important to keep listening out for new suggestions, even when they're doing an action.

Here are some more examples:

'Let's all waddle like ducks.'

'Let's all sleep by the fireplace.'

'Let's all herd sheep.'

Buzzy Bees:

Ask the group to buzz around the room like bees. When you shout 'FREEZE' and then a letter of the alphabet, for example 'D', all the children must shape their own bodies into a statue of something beginning with the letter 'D'.

Ask each 'statue' to tell you who they are. If there is more than one of the same thing they are 'out' and must sit and watch. This encourages the group to think of words and ideas that no one else will have thought of and not to copy each other.

Each round is played until you have a winning child or several! The children become buzzing bees between each letter to have some time to focus their energy and then contrast it with the statues.

Extension: Instead of calling out a letter, you could ask the group to make their statues by theme, for example 'animals you'd find on a farm', 'animals you'd find in the jungle', 'animals who live in the water' etc.

Which Character?:

Label the four sides of the room as different characters, for example, Babe, Fly, Farmer Hoggett and Ma. Explain to the children that you will give a clue about a character and they have to decide who you're describing and run to that wall of the room.

For example, 'Who walks on two legs?' 'Who gave birth to a litter of puppies?' 'Who eats grass?' 'Who was a prize at the country fair?'

You could use this game to find out how much the children remember about the play or you could pose questions that relate to the different animals, their habitats and characteristics.

Exercises:

Sharing Opinions:

This exercise will encourage your group to think about the play and to share opinions about what they saw.

Ask the group to form a circle, everyone sitting on a chair. Explain that there will always be someone in the middle of the circle who doesn't have a chair (you can be the first person). The person in the middle must say something that is true about them. For example:

'Anyone who has a pet cat.'

Everyone to whom the statement applies should get up and move to another chair (not one immediately next to them). The person in the middle should try to get to a chair, thus leaving a new person standing up.

Once the group has got used to the format of the game, add a new rule that all their statements should be opinions about Babe. For example:

'Anyone who thought Babe was clever.'
'Anyone who thought the dog was scary.'
'Anyone who liked the songs.'

If people are stuck for things to say, you can add the rule that any time the person in the middle says 'anyone who has red shoes', everybody has to change places.

Building a Scene:

The aim of this activity is to create a frozen scene using everyone in the group. First, the group decides on where the scene should be set. Ask them to choose something from Babe, the fair for example. Then, one by one, members of the group create the scene in the centre of the circle, by stating what they are and then creating a shape with their bodies.

E.g.: If the scene is at the country fair:

Person 1: I am a tree.
Person 2: I am bunting in the tree.
Person 3: I am a candyfloss machine.
Person 4: I am a dog.
Etc...

This encourages creativity and spontaneity. The group could also suggest scenes that they'd like to create – but make sure they pick things with plenty of scope. The children can also be encouraged to think about what makes an interesting stage picture – different levels, facial expressions etc.

Extension 1: Ask the group to make the scene come to life on your command, then freeze again when you say so.

Extension 2: You could do a variation of this exercise in which the group chooses a key moment from the play to create. For example, you could re-create the moment Babe wins the sheep dog trials. Once everyone is in position in the scene, ask the group to think of one word or short sentence that their character (or inanimate object!) could be thinking. Explain that when you tap them on the shoulder, they should speak this thought or word out loud.

Soundscapes:

Choose one of your locations from the previous exercise. In a circle, ask the group to close their eyes. Tell them that, in a moment, you would like them to make a sound that might be heard in that location; this could be vocal, or made using the body or the floor. When you give the cue, ask everyone to make their sound and to keep repeating it until you tell them to stop.

When you have finished, discuss the impact of the soundscape with the group. Was it effective? Did anyone have a particular picture in their mind when you heard the sounds?

Extension 1, conducted soundscapes: You can do (or repeat) this exercise with eyes open, using a conductor. The conductor will point to people when it's time for them to start making their sound and will agree a signal for 'stop'. Other signals can be built in along the way if appropriate, for example raising and lowering volume, speeding up or slowing down. In this version, it is easier to hear contributions from individuals before building up into a whole group soundscape.

Once signals have been agreed, you can pass the responsibility (and power!) of conducting to members of the group.

Extension 2, small group soundscapes: After the initial whole group soundscape, split into smaller groups of around 5. Each group should build on the initial ideas to rehearse a soundscape that will introduce the audience to one of the locations.

Ask each group to consider the emotion or atmosphere they would like to evoke. Encourage them to play with where they place the audience. How close will they come to the audience? Do they perform behind the audience members' backs? Could the audience be enclosed by performers? There should be time to play with lots of different ways to make sounds, perhaps introducing simple instruments too.

Once the audience is seated each time, ask them to close their eyes and listen carefully to each group's performance. Ask for feedback on what was successful, what images or feelings came to mind etc.

Sheep Herding:

Ask the participants to get into small groups. Each group huddles together, facing one direction (like a herd of sheep). Whoever is at the front is the leader and s/he decides how the group will move. Everyone else in that group should copy that movement, trying to keep close together at the same time. Every now and again, the group should stop and turn, allowing a new leader to emerge. If the group is struggling to think of movements, you could set some boundaries (e.g. leading with a particular body part or aiming to show a particular emotion).

Ask the group which ways of moving best represent sheep.

Extension 1: The groups repeat the exercise, but this time they will also aim to cut across other groups, cutting people off and therefore forcing them to join their group. The group that's the biggest at the end is the winner.

Extension 2: You could try creating a scene with Babe and the sheep; ask one child to play the part of Babe whilst the groups take it in turns to be the obedient sheep. Perhaps you could set up a small obstacle course in the space for the sheep to get round!

This exercise is great for encouraging the children to work, and move, together. Changing leader frequently ensures that everyone has a turn to make decisions for the rest of the group.

Stop Press!:

When Babe wins the sheepdog trials, the reporters go wild! For this exercise, ask everyone in the group to find a partner. One person (A) is a TV presenter, the other person (B) is someone who has watched Babe win (this could be a member of the crowd, Fly, Farmer Hoggett, Mrs Hoggett or someone else of the children's choosing).

A interviews B as though they are on TV. It is A's job to keep the interview going by asking interesting questions. B must try to give answers that are as full as possible. Tell A to find out as much as they can from B: What happened? Who else was there? What did B think about it all?

The group can share their interviews with one another.

Writing Extension: Ask the group to write a newspaper article about the event. Encourage them to use ideas from the TV interviews to help with this. Perhaps they could use quotes from some of the characters who were interviewed.

Pig Fact File:

- They are very intelligent; it has been said that they're the fifth most intelligent animal in the world behind, man, monkey, dolphin and whale.
- Adult females are called 'sows' and adult males are called 'boars' and babies are called 'piglets'.
- Newborn piglets recognise their mother's voice. The mother pig 'sings' to them while nursing!
- They roll in mud to keep cool and to stop from getting sunburnt.
- They are clean animals. They keep where they sleep, clean and tidy.
- They have a well-developed sense of smell. They are used to find truffles and have been used by the police to sniff out drugs.

Ask the class to research pigs and find some interesting facts to add to the fact file.