

20. Stills from a movie

Use Introducing the activity plus Basic activity and one of the Variations, followed by Drawing things together. Please read the Basic activity before making your choice.

Teacher's notes

- Use with dramatic stories where people are reacting in different ways to the events, e.g., Jesus' miracles or parts of the Moses narrative.
- You will find a camera useful with this activity (possibly one for each group).

Introducing the activity

Talk about films the pupils have recently watched. If they had to choose one moment from the film to capture as a still photograph, which would it be and why? Discuss what makes a good actor (i.e., being 100% in character 100% of the time). You could play a game calling out different emotions and asking pupils to take up a position which reflects that emotion.

Basic activity

Make sure pupils are familiar with a story involving several people who may react in different ways to the events. Assign pupils to appropriately-sized groups for acting out the story. They then form a tableau of a particular point in the story.

Variation 1: Tableaux

Pupils choose what they consider to be the most dramatic point in the story. One person in each group becomes the stage director, the others take up characters within the story. Each person thinks about the character they are to be and how they would react at this point in the story. Then they take up a position which represents this. The stage director then directs them to stand in appropriate places so a whole tableau is formed, and if possible takes a photograph of it.

Variation 2: Fast forward

Tell the pupils which moment in the story you wish them to concentrate on. They then form a tableau of that point, making sure the different characters are reacting appropriately and showing this in their

stance. Ask them to practise getting into this position at a moment's notice. Then ask them to imagine the film is fast-forwarded to a future point. What would their positions be like then? Ask them to practise changing from one to the other in an instant. They can then 'perform' their two positions to the rest of the class. At each point each actor could say one sentence about the position they are in, or you could assign a commentator to explain it to the class.

Variation 3: Crowd scene

This can be done as a whole class. Ask pupils to create a character for themselves as a member of the crowd watching the events of the story. They could begin by writing about themselves (age, profession, personality, family, etc.). Once they have created a character for themselves you can read the story, stopping at key points and asking them to show their reactions as the personality they have created. You can comment on particular people's positions and what this shows about how they are reacting.

Drawing things together

If you have taken photographs you can use these as the basis for display; each character writes a thought bubble to add to the photograph explaining what they were thinking at the time. Also take time to discuss what it felt like to be in character, and remember to allow time for them to come out of character at the end if they have got very involved in their role.