

## Ideas for plays and drama.

Hello everyone, I hope you are well!

I have been thinking about scripts and story. To create drama, it is not necessary to start with a script, but it is essential to begin with a good story! Luckily for us, Chinese culture is rich in myth, legend and great stories. The one I am thinking of is the story of the Chinese zodiac. This would be so good for Dramafest, as it is quite elastic and could be done by a small or large cast. The students could, for example, combine together to show the different animals in the Chinese zodiac competing to be first to cross the river, or you could have one student representing each animal.

Masks are also extremely useful in drama and can be put on and taken off quickly to represent different characters – much easier than students struggling into and out of costumes in the wings of the stage. I can really see masks being very useful in telling the story of the Chinese zodiac – or the story of the Nien and how the lion dance came to be - you could also use puppets to tell both this and many other tales – there is nothing in the Dramafest rules forbidding the use of puppets for storytelling.

Another way to start is to choose a general theme and to have 3 x 5 minute plays demonstrating the theme. Your theme, could, for example, be ‘Cunning’ and you could have your students acting out the following three stories:

### 1. Siu Ling

Siu Ling liked to draw. She wanted a brush. She said, “I want a brush, I want a brush, I want a brush.” Then, she suddenly saw a brush appear!

Siu Ling drew a duck. It ran away. “Oh!” cried Siu Ling. “My brush is magic.” Then, Siu Ling drew a dog. It ran away too. “Oh!” cried Siu Ling. “My brush is magic.” Then Siu Ling drew a pig. It ran away too. “Oh!” cried Siu Ling. “My brush is magic.”

A greedy king heard about the magic brush and wanted Siu Ling and her brush. “I WANT A MONEY TREE,” said the king. “No! I will not draw a money tree,” said Siu Ling.

Then the king put Siu Ling in prison.

“I need a key,” said Siu Ling. She drew a key. She opened the door. She ran away.

“I want a horse,” said Siu Ling. She drew a horse. She went home on the horse. Her mother and father were delighted to see her, as they loved their only daughter very much.

*How could you use cloth to tell the story of Siu Ling? How many actors would you need here? Could one actor play more than one part in this drama? Do you need a narrator? What other characters could you invent for this play? If you had 20 actors, how could you use them in this play? What sort of music could the actors make? If you could use only 3 props, what would you use to enhance the telling of the tale?*

## 2. The Fish and the Cat.

“I like the sun,” said the fish, swimming around a pond

“I like the sun,” said the cat, said the cat, as it walked towards the pond.

“I like the moon,” said the fish, as it swam closer to the edge of the pond.

“I like the moon,” said the cat, as it stopped near the edge of the pond.

“I like the stars,” said the fish, as it swam up to the edge of the pond.

“I like the stars,” said the cat, which walked to the edge of the pond and then stopped, for it hated water.

“I like the flowers,” said the fish, as it jumped swam merrily through a patch of weed at the edge of the pond.

“I like the flowers,” said the cat, looking hungrily into the pond.

“I like the rocks,” said the fish, jumping over a small rock at the edge of the pond

“I like the rocks,” said the cat, moving quickly to stand on the rock the fish had just leaped over.

“I like fish,” said the cat, stretching out its paw...

“I like water,” said the fish, sending an enormous wave towards the cat with its powerful tail!

SPLASH!

“I do not like water,” said the cat, said the drenched, miserable cat.

“Too bad!” said the fish, and swam away.

*There is a rather beautiful natural scene in this tale – how could you represent it if you were not allowed to use props or furniture or a backdrop? How could student show or represent the scene? How would the students establish the characters of the fish and the cat? How would the actors build up the tension of the scene? How could you use cloth here? Could cloth be used to represent water? What else could it be used for? Do you need a narrator?*

## 3. The fish and the golden rope.

A man liked to row his boat. He also liked fishing. He put his fishing line in the river and after a while, caught a huge golden fish. The fish was beautiful, smooth, shiny and glistening!

“Please, let me go...” pleaded the fish.

“No, I want to eat you!” said the man.

“Please let me go...” begged the beautiful fish.” I can give you a golden rope. It will make you very rich. Put your fishing line in the river,” said the fish.

The man put his fishing line in the river and slowly pulled up a heavy golden rope.

“Please, let me go,” said the fish.

“Hang on, I can’t see the end of the hope,” said the man excitedly. The man continued pulling on the rope and more of it piled up in his little boat.

“Please, let me go,” said the fish in a sad voice.

“No, I can’t see the end of the rope!” said the fisherman, excited by the riches that would be his, as the heavy rope continued to pile up in his little boat.

“Please, let me go,” the great golden fish continued to plead.

“No, no, no! I still can’t see the end.” said the man, who continued to pull up the rope, which by now quite filled his little boat.

“Please let me go,” said the fish “You have the golden rope now...”

“Oh no! Don’t try to trick me, fish!” said the man, whose boat was now so full of the golden rope that it had sunk dangerously low in the water.” “I will sell you, fish, when I have finished pulling up all the rope!”

The man continued to pull more heavy rope into the boat and the little boat suddenly...

SANK!

The fish swam away happily.

*How could you represent this scene? It happens on the water. How could you involve 6-8 students in this play? Would a gold cloth be helpful? How would you show the boat? How would you show the greed of the man and the cunning of the fish? What music/sound effects could the students use to enhance this play?*

Last year, I directed and acted in a production in a drama festival in France. Our overarching theme was “What do women want?” and we answered this question in 3 x 15 minute playlets. We used traditional tales to ask and answer the question. (By the way, the answer was ‘freedom!’) There were 12 people in our group and each playlet used 3 or 4 actors. When one group was playing, the other 2 groups of actors did not exit the stage, but remained on stage as an ‘audience’ and also helped to direct the reaction of the audience sitting on chairs below the stage. For example, the ‘audience’ on stage booed and hissed when the beautiful princess was kidnapped. This ‘audience’ on the stage can also be very useful in helping to create sound effects – machinery can malfunction – but actors on stage can always make noise! So think about the use of the ‘audience on the stage’.

I hope these ideas are useful.

Here are more scripts:

*Dramatized Parodies of Familiar Stories: Six One-Act, Royalty-Free Scripts, with Original Song Lyrics set to Familiar Melodies.* by Claire Bolio

*Tell it Together: Foolproof Scripts for Story Theatre* by Barbara McBride-Smith.

*One-Act Plays for Teenagers: A Collection of Royalty-Free Comedies* by Earl. J Dias

*Heinemann Plays: Big Issues – Scripts and Sketches for Citizenship* by Ann Cartwright.

Online:

[www.dramasource.com](http://www.dramasource.com)

[www.lazybeescripts.co.uk](http://www.lazybeescripts.co.uk)

Yours Playfully,

Tanya.