

AR2-5b: Drama Activity

Introduction

Read the Story of Bernadette (AR2-5a) to the pupils.

Activity 1 – Role Play

In Groups of 3 the children create a short role play of the 3 children going to collect fire wood, scene 1.

Scene 1 –

Bernadette was born in a small town in France called Lourdes. Her family was very poor and had to share one cold room. The only way to keep warm was to burn sticks which the children had to collect.

One cold winter's day, Bernadette, her sister, Tionette, and her friend, Jeanne, were gathering fire-wood beside a river. They had been out all day and it was now growing dark. Tionette and Jeanne set off for home, crossing the icy cold river in their bare feet. Bernadette hesitated. She didn't want to cross the river because it was so cold and she felt getting her feet wet might bring on her asthma.

FREEZE

Thought track* the children, highlighting that their innocence and non-expectance of what was going to happen next.

Activity 2– Mime

The children imagine they are Bernadette and that they don't want to put their foot into the icy water, read scene 2 as the children act out how Bernadette reacted when she saw the beautiful Lady.

*Tionette and Jeanne called to her from the other side of the river. Bernadette was just about to follow them across, when she heard the sound of a great wind. She looked round and out of a cave in the rock, came a beautiful young lady. She wore a sparkling white dress and a veil. She smiled at Bernadette and beckoned to her to come closer. Bernadette could not believe what she was seeing but she was not afraid. She knelt down and began to pray. The lady prayed with her. After a while, the vision of the lady disappeared. **FREEZE***

Activity 3 – Role on the Wall

The children sit in a circle around the whiteboard and listen to the next part of the story:

Tionette and Jeanne returned to find Bernadette kneeling. They urged her to hurry across the river. Bernadette put her foot in the water. It felt warm. On the way home, Bernadette told Tionette and Jeanne about the beautiful lady. They didn't believe her. Bernadette's mum did not believe her either. "Such nonsense!" she said, "you are never to go back to that cave again".

On the whiteboard draw a silhouette of Bernadette. Discuss how Bernadette was thinking and feeling at this point in the story and write these inside the outline.

Activity 4 – Hot Seating

Listen to the last part of the story again:

Bernadette pleaded with her mum and, after three days, she was allowed to return to the cave. She saw the beautiful lady and, again, they prayed together. After that, Bernadette went to pray with the lady day after day. People got to hear about Bernadette and her vision and large crowds followed her to the cave. But no one, except Bernadette, could see the vision of the beautiful lady.

Some people said Bernadette was mad and laughed at her. Others said she was lying and shouted at her. She was slapped and spat upon. She was spoken to by her teacher, her priest, the local police and other important people who came all the way from Paris. All of these people wanted Bernadette to say that her vision of the beautiful lady was not real.

Bernadette answered all their questions in a quiet, gentle way. But she would not give up her belief that her vision of the beautiful lady was real.

Select children to act as characters from the story. As they sit in the centre of the circle the other children interview them about their thoughts and feelings on what has taken place in the story.

Key points to explore

Bernadette – how does she feel that no one believes her?

Bernadette's Mother – What does she think of her daughter whom she believes to be lying?

The Teacher – who already thinks Bernadette is silly because she has missed so much school work.

The Police – who are getting angry with all the commotion this is causing.

The Priests – who do not yet believe that this is Mary the Mother of Jesus.

Plenary

Discuss what the children think will happen next, will people believe Bernadette?

***Thought tracking** – asking each character in a role play or freeze frame what their character is thinking and feeling at that particular moment in the scene.