

HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROTEST THEATRE*

Siyavula Uploaders

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1 ARTS AND CULTURE

2 Grade 8

3 CRITICAL AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION

4 Module 12

5 HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROTEST THEATRE

DRAMA

We shall be looking at the following in this module:

- the issue of human rights
- protest theatre
- the Holocaust during the Second World War

6 Activity 1:

7 To research human rights: THE HOLOCAUST

8 [LO 2.2, 2.7]

Drama also has a serious side to it – which you will experience with this activity. Drama is not only entertaining, but informative and educational as well.

1. The Project

Research the Holocaust during the Second World War and the era of apartheid in South Africa and compile a record of your findings.

The project must include the following:

Illustrations, pictures, photographs

- Germany and the rise of Nazism
- Anti-semitism and racism
- Concentration camps
- Jewish culture
- Apartheid in South Africa and how it compares to Anti-semitism

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- South African Protest Theatre

Examples of South African Protest Theatre

- Woza Albert
- Sizwe Banzi is Dead
- District 6
- Sophia Town

The following questions should be answered:

- What is protest theatre?
- Why is protest theatre necessary?
- Is protest theatre entertainment?

2. Improvisation

You will be divided into groups of 6 - 8

Select an aspect from your research on the Holocaust that you would like to portray in improvisation

The improvisation should not be more than two minutes long

The improvisation should include the following:

- a message
- beginning, middle and end
- climax
- specific setting
- definite characterisation

You have ten minutes to plan your improvisation

Each group must perform their scene (in three minutes) for the rest of the class

3. Class Discussion

Discuss the following aspects after each performance:

- Could this scene be classified as protest theatre?
- Was the issue of human rights prominent?
- Did the scene have a climax?
- What was the message of the scene?
- Did the characters contribute to the message?
- How would you improve on the scene?
- Did everyone work together as a team?
- Did the scene evoke any emotion in the audience?

9 Assessment

Learning Outcome(LOs)
<i>continued on next page</i>

LU 2
REFLECTINGThe learner will be able to reflect critically and creatively on artistic and cultural processes, products and styles in past and present contexts.
Assessment Standards(ASs)
We know this when the learner:
COMPOSITE
2.2 discusses how the Arts have contributed and can contribute towards social and cultural change (e.g. as a mirror, in documentaries, as suggestions, commentaries, predictions).
DANCE
2.4 discusses dances in own social, cultural and historical contexts, focusing on gender, disability and power;
DRAMA
2.5 researches human rights and environmental issues and interprets these in small group role-plays;
MUSIC
2.6 listens to and demonstrates how the use of polyphony in African music accords participants equitable space in the making of music;
VISUAL ARTS
2.7 identifies and explains how photography, filmmaking, sculpture and printmaking can document human rights abuses;2.8 comments on composition, style and subject matter in artworks (e.g. landscape, portraits, still-life, public art or resistance art) over time.

Table 1

10 Memorandum

Activity 1

- Before we can begin to research and explore the topic of “The Holocaust”, we have to have a clear understanding of the term, “Human Rights”.
- **“Human rights”** are the universal rights held to belong to individuals by virtue of their being human, encompassing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and freedoms, and based on the notion of personal human dignity and worth.

The Columbia Electronic Encyclopaedia

- Since World War II Human Rights have become a universally espoused yet widely disregarded concept. Organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch promote human rights and denounce human rights abuses.

Human rights issues include

- civil rights
 - feminism
 - gay-rite movement
 - war crimes
-
- For the purpose of this activity we shall be exploring “war crimes”, and more specifically, “The Holocaust”.

10.1 The Holocaust

- ‘The Holocaust’ refers to the intentional systematic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. The Jews were killed because of supposed ‘racial characteristics’.

10.2 Why do we have to be aware of The Holocaust?

- The Holocaust transcends time, space, and all lines of race or religion. Its human significance is universal and its lessons are relevant to everyone – particularly South Africans who have recently emerged from the apartheid era during which prejudice, racism and discrimination was institutionalised. Laws that are based on prejudice, racism and discrimination can lead to institutionalised violence, brutality and torture and ultimately to Genocide as happened in Nazi Germany.
- We need to learn from the mistakes that were made and make sure we do not repeat them. We also need to learn about the ultimate consequences of prejudice, racism, intolerance, discrimination, and human rights violations, and we need to strive towards the creation of a society in which these evils will not be tolerated.

10.3 Protest Theatre

- The Arts is one of the mediums at our disposal to make people aware of political, social and environmental issues and serves as a platform to advocate these issues.

Protest Theatre

- It is dramas and theatre productions created to give voice to injustice.
- It aids in giving visual and oral expression in assimilating negative feelings.
- It is aimed at evoking awareness of the issues in public or for all who are observing the performance.

Exercise1: The Project

- Have the learners research the Holocaust and compile a record of their findings.
- The project must include the following
 - illustrations, pictures, photographs
 - Germany and the rise of Nazism
 - Anti-semitism and racism
 - Concentration camps
 - Jewish culture
 - Apartheid in South Africa and how it compares to Anti-semitism

- South African Protest Theatre

- Examples of South African Protest Theatre
- Woza Albert
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- District 6
- Sophia Town
- The following questions should be answered

- What is protest theatre?

- Why is protest theatre necessary?
- Is protest theatre entertainment?

Exercise 2: Improvisation

- Divide the learners into groups of six to eight.
- Have each group select an aspect from their research on the Holocaust that they would like to portray in improvisation.
- The improvisation should not be more than 2 minutes long.
- The improvisation should include the following:
 - a message
 - beginning, middle and end
 - climax
 - specific setting

- definite characterisation

- Give the learners not more than five minutes to plan their improvisation.
- Have each group perform their scene for the rest of the class.

Exercise 3: Class Discussion

- Have the learners discuss the following aspects after each performance:
 - Could this scene be classified as protest theatre?
 - Was the issue of human rights prominent?
 - Did the scene have a climax?
 - What was the message of the scene?
 - Did the characters contribute to the message?
 - How would you improve on the scene?
 - Did everyone work together as a team?

- Did the scene evoke any emotion in the audience?

Hints / Suggestions

- Make sure you are fully prepared for this Activity in order for you to answer any questions that might arise.
- If possible, show the learners a video on the Holocaust, e.g. *Schindler's List*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Piano*, *Life is Beautiful*
- Encourage class participation in all the exercises.
- Give a small prize to the best project and best improvisation as an incentive.