



THE ALPHA SHOW OF

Hercules

ALPHASHOWS
Post-Show Activities

This guide contains classroom activities for use AFTER the Alpha show of 'Hercules'. For ease-of-use and duplication, it might be easier to download these documents from the website <http://www.alphashows.com.au/curriculum>

**[Photocopy / print / email this document
and give to all teachers AFTER the show]**

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ALPHASHOWS – **POST-SHOW** ACTIVITIES for 'Hercules'

ABOUT THE POST SHOW ACTIVITIES



Post-show ideas

Read this guide for ideas for discussions and activities that are great for the afternoon or next day or so after an Alpha show.

Advanced Topics

Some of the topics covered here may not be suitable for discussion, especially with younger year levels, but we wish to include some of the more advanced ideas, even if just for your own information, about the thinking and creativity that has gone into this show; and certainly we would welcome hearing about how discussion went with your children about any of these advanced topics!

We apologise that this pack is so long, we know your time is valuable. We just wanted to provide as much information as possible, to cover the possibility that you may wish to do a lot of post show work with your students. There is even more information available on our website, link below.

POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES

➔ Autographs and talking with the actors

Learning Area: Theatre / Performing Arts / Values Education

Outcome: To give an experience that is beyond expectations to children; to allow them to meet and be inspired by the role models of the actor behind the character

Information:

Immediately post-show, children are encouraged to talk with the actors and some may even wish to get autographs. If many children want autographs or personal messages, we will provide one A4 sheet that can be photocopied for any student that wants one, and the six actors will sign it as the various characters they played. It will also have our contact details on it for anyone who would like to contact their favourite character.

Encourage your children to talk to the actors about who they are, how they came to work in a job that is their dream job and find their true purpose in life.

➔ Drawing

Learning Area: Art

Outcome: To let children express their creativity at a time when they will be highly inspired by the visual stimulus they will have had

Information:

Children might like to spend some time drawing their favourite character from the show (subtle hint: we always love to receive pictures and messages from children! We usually add these to the website too!) and writing about their favourite character, scene etc

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➔ **Write to Alpha!**



Learning Area: Literacy / Values Education / Art

Outcome: To give children a chance to express themselves in their creative writing.

Information:

There is nothing we love more than to receive letters, pictures and feedback from our number one clients – the children! The actors are:

Hercules 2009

Hercules – Mark Taylor

Megara – Hayley Nissen

Phil / Weasel – Ashley Weidner

Pegasus / Muse – Katja Glieson

Hades – Ben Jackson

Zeus / Amphitryon – Toby Wilkins

You may also like to use the Values based Worksheets which helps structure the writing responses as well as reinforce some of the values of the show.

Activity

Encourage them to write to individual characters, or to the actors themselves. A great letter structure is:

- ◆ Greeting
- ◆ My favourite part / the funniest part was
- ◆ What I learned
- ◆ Questions

A great way to send through mail is on the website

<http://www.alphashows.com.au>

Click on the "KIDS!" Button and the on the "Write to the Characters" bit.

If you want to send through pictures and letters in the old fashioned way ;-)) send to:

ALPHASHOWS

1565 Westernport Highway

Langwarrin Vic 3910

Any queries call 03 5978 5789

We do try to reply to any messages as soon as we can!

Activity #2

As mentioned, we have a KIDS section on our site. This is where children can find word games, memory games and colour-ins all relating to Alpha shows, as well as where to write to the characters/actors. Also explore other sections and do some research on the company, the other shows, look at the pictures and listen to the music! Encourage discussions with other children on the forum (<http://www.alphashows.com.au/forum>).

Our main website address is: <http://www.alphashows.com.au>.

➔ **Discussions about the show**

Learning Area:

Literacy / Theatre / Performing Arts / Values Education

Outcome: One of the most important parts of Alpha Shows is that there are subtle themes running throughout the show. If you take notice, you'll notice lines, songs and sequences scattered everywhere in the show, that you can use to create values-based learnings. If children are particularly excited straight after the show, use this time to discuss, draw and play. It is one of the most valuable things you can do when you have the children in a 'peak state for learning' after our show.

Information:

All learning and significant memories happen through emotion. The idea is to use the peak emotional state created by the show to create learnings and memories that will last a lifetime. It's best to not try and 'quieten' or 'dull' the emotional state – use it instead. You can even start to use some of the parts of the show or question time (eg. Clever questions, 1,2,3 You Rock etc) to create 'anchors' (ie. reminders or links) to those emotional states so you can utilise them whenever you need to.

Activity: Discussion points

Alpha's version of the story

You might like to revisit some of the discussions before the show, talk about what their expectations were of the story and what we changed or did better or added in for fun.

Consequences

Match up behaviours and consequences (especially with regards to Hades' bullying and 'by force' tactics).

Greek Myths

Compare and contrast your discussion and study of the greek myths to the content of Alpha's Hercules. What parts were similar? What parts were different? Discuss how a dramatic play or movie often has to make artistic choices when taking actual (or mythical) events and putting them into a dramatic context. What parts were completely made up?

Megara

Discussion about Megara and where she has come from. There were many themes about her past and how she believed she could not rely on other people, especially men, as they had betrayed her or let her down in the past. Discuss the consequences of holding on to limiting beliefs like this. What might you miss out on if you believed these sorts of things? What did Megara end up choosing in the end?

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Being a true hero

Many children believe that being a hero is about how strong you are, or being famous, or maybe even being smarter or better in some way compared to others. A true hero is someone who has the strength of heart and the strength of character to stay true to what they know is right. Not a social form of 'right vs wrong' but a right of doing right by yourself and others, of serving humanity and being the change, starting from yourself, that needs to happen in the world. Hercules learnt this lesson. And he also showed himself to be the ultimate hero. Not by fighting and being violent and 'defeating' an evil, defeating an enemy, but instead, by sacrificing himself, for the good of others. Many heroes in this world don't get acknowledgement, so discuss all the different heroes in this world that aren't as obvious as a fireman etc.

For children, being a hero should be something attainable NOW. The show should have given 'heroism' a feeling of "I can be a hero now" and it would be great to ensure your students understand this. A hero is about being who you really are, and being yourself.

See the section below about being a hero as well as the advanced topics.

Isolation & Your Gifts

Hercules was different. And people picked on him for being different. This can make a person feel isolated. Like many children do today, being isolated can sometimes not feel so nice. Encourage compassion for those that are different significantly, but also discuss how all of us are different in our own way and the struggle of so many students in primary and high school to try to 'be the same as everyone else' will only ultimately end in pain and frustration. The song 'stick to the status quo' in the show was about this. About the folly of trying to always 'not stick out' for fear of being embarrassed. This seems to be one of the strongest needs for many children, to not be different. This is due to our inherent nature, especially as children, to recognise the 'oneness' of all humanity. We are, indeed, all one. And yet, in our existence on this planet, we also have our own special gift to give to the world. Philoctetes during the show, got a few of the audience to tell us their gifts, so you could get all your students to write down what their gift is to the world. Further, whilst it is worthy and natural to want to connect and fit in and be like others, and find others who are like you, encourage diversity in friendships, opinions and viewpoints. It is through the acceptance and tolerance of diversity that oneness will ultimately be created – so therefore a balance between both connection and being unique is needed in order to achieve our ultimate destiny. Discuss ways in which this can happen.

Pantomime

What were the specific pantomime elements we used? Which ones were traditional? Which ones were newer Alpha-styled ones? Why did we use a pantomime style? How did it make the show more fun and appealing to all age groups? What parts of pantomime are annoying and seem silly? Why do we still use these silly parts of pantomime?

Song selection

Take a look at our song selection and discuss what songs were great and which ones they liked best. Also look at the incidental music we used, such as the classical instrumentals to set mood.

For more discussion topics, see the Advanced Topics section at the end

➔ The Theatre Experience

Learning Area: Theatre / Music / Performing Arts / Technology

Outcome: To increase awareness of the art form of theatre; to encourage a love for theatre, art and culture; to encourage participation and increased skill levels in your own performing arts events

Information: Alpha brought a live theatre event right into your school. And if you had a blackout and a stage, the effect was virtually identical to taking a trip to a Melbourne theatre. It had lights, sound, effects and a quality story that was entertaining, memorable and life changing.

Activity: The Theatre Experience

Explore the theatre experience – ask questions about how we created all the elements of theatre. These activities and points for discussion are also great if you want tips on how to create characters on stage or even for emotional mastery in all areas of life. For example:

- ◆ the way the characters were portrayed / playing more than 1 character
 - You might like to guess which actors played more than one character!
- ◆ the costumes
- ◆ makeup
- ◆ choreography
- ◆ sound and lighting
- ◆ scenery and the way the set worked / scenes were changed
- ◆ the experience of being an actor:
 - Managing feelings of embarrassment on stage. This is a common issue for children performers. Our answer to it is always “Who do you have to focus on to feel embarrassed?” The answer is, of course, yourself. So we use the example of the actors on stage and say we’re focussing on the audience’s enjoyment, not ourselves, so we don’t get embarrassed. This is a great lesson for life too. Focus on other people and contributing to others and your life will be better and you won’t get so ‘internal’ and embarrassed all the time
 - Learning lines, the importance of doing this BEFORE rehearsals
 - Having fun and playing FULL OUT. The best parts in the show were created from us being silly, being over the top and having a lot of fun in rehearsals
 - Making the decision to “BE AN ACTOR/PERFORMER”. If you have children who would like to do this as a career one day, or even just want to be in the school production, this is the NUMBER ONE thing they must do first. Make the choice, and declare to everyone “I AM AN ACTOR”. That way all the necessary teachers, lessons, opportunities etc will come into your life to create this identity for you. Make sure they understand that they don’t need to know “how” to do it, just make the choice and everything will eventually fall into place if you focus on who you have decided to be, and keep having fun and feeling good.
- ◆ the process of developing and portraying a character on stage:
 - Specifically, state management. All emotions are created by your ‘state’, your emotional state. State is controlled by ONLY 3 things:
 - PHYSIOLOGY. ie your physicality, your internal biology etc
 - FOCUS. What you’re focussing on (and what you decide things mean)
 - LANGUAGE. The words you use to describe things and communicate with.
 - You can use these 3 things to create any emotional state on stage that you want.

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- Incidentally, this is also how you can teach children to manage their emotional states at ANY TIME in their life. If you're feeling bad about something, first thing to do is change your physiology. Drink water. Move around. Put your shoulders back and head high. The other 2 have a similar effect, although physiology is the most powerful, especially with children.
- If they also change their focus, and what things mean to them, that will also change how they feel in any moment. Same with language – what you label things with in our language creates your reality.

More Activities about the Theatre Experience:

Theatre and pantomime are different to 'real life'. Break up into groups and do your own version of the story – act out the whole show in 3 minutes!

First, brainstorm some techniques to include to make your performance very panto!

- ◆ Repetitions (usually groups of three). We don't usually speak like this in real life.
- ◆ Clichés and stereotypes.
 - We use these to quickly communicate the type of character, situation or problem
- ◆ Comedic traditions
 - Like our 'He's behind you' 'Boo!' asking the audience questions or other traditions we use in almost all our shows.
- ◆ 'Asides'
 - ie. talking to the audience without the other characters hearing
 - some of our shows have two scenes going simultaneously on either side of the stage
- ◆ Stage conventions
 - Like the fact we all talk to each other whilst facing the front
 - Stage Right (SR) and Stage Left (SL)
 - Add singing and sound effects (you can make all kinds of sounds with your mouth!)
- ◆ Gestures
 - These are always BIG! This is different to real life and part of playing a character on the stage
- ◆ Suspension of disbelief
 - You can't get emotionally involved and excited without this occurring
 - Discuss the importance of this with ALL theatre, movies and stories
- ◆ 'Cheating'
 - The way we might enter on stage when a character we're not supposed to see is just leaving – to avoid gaps in the show
 - Maybe we are pretending to be able to see something when we really can't
- ◆ Time distortions
 - To keep the show moving and maintain a good pace, we distort time. So even though 80 to 90 minutes passed it could represent days or weeks, and sometimes even years

We have found many students are just generally much more excited about theatre in general after seeing one of our shows - you can encourage more participation in the arts as well as going to see more live theatre outside of school.

➔ **Fairytale Village**

Learning Area:

Science & Technology / Art / Literacy

Outcome: To use their science and art skills to create a model of a village and to explore the consequences of mixing up characters and stories.

Materials: Boxes, egg cartons paper, pipe cleaners, glue, scissors, wooden pegs etc

Information: Expand on what children have seen in the Alpha sets by creating their own fairytale environment. Many children actually see more than is actually represented on the stage and they should be encouraged to explore this part of their imagination. For example, a young boy once told us that he loved the birds flying over the set...we were quite surprised as there were no birds! To him, however, they were real.

Activity:

Fairytale Village. Encourage children to create and set up a Fairytale Village made out of boxes and cartons etc. Each child can choose a fairytale character and make the house, castle etc that belongs to that person or animal. Make the 3 little pigs houses of straw, sticks and bricks, make Rapunzel's tower, Cinderella's cottage, Sleeping Beauty's palace, grandmother's house, a big giant's house – as many as you can think of!

Make all these structures into a village by adding roads and trees. Then create little characters to live in the village out of wooden pegs.

Children can act out fairytales and try putting fairytale characters in different situations and settings:

- ◆ what if the City Mouse and the Country Mouse dropped in on the Three Little Pigs?
- ◆ What if the Steadfast Tin Soldier tried saving Rapunzel from her tower in the Village of Round and Square Houses?

Encourage children to investigate different combinations of their favourite fairytale characters

➔ **Re-enacting Alpha's story**

Learning Area:

Theatre / Music / Performing Arts / Values Education

Outcome: To have fun re-enacting parts of the show; increase performance skills; to be a sprinboard for discussion about the values and content of the show.

Information:

Children should be reasonably excited by the show and certainly have favourite parts, their funniest character etc. You can use this excitement to anchor in peak states and emotions that can bring even the most unconfident and shy child out of their shell.

Activity:

Have the children re-enact their favourite part of the show.

Finish each performance with questions on what was great about it and also the lessons learned / what ultimately happened to the characters etc.

Example: If the children re-enact a portion where the Villain is being nasty or a character is being silly and making crude jokes, bring it back to something relevant or an important reason why that part was in the show.

➔ The Adaptation

Learning Area:

Literacy / Theatre / Values Education

Outcome: To gain an understanding of how classic literary stories are adapted and made into a modern musical rock concert show.

Information:

Alpha makes classic stories with serious themes fun and entertaining by adding in slapstick and other comedy elements. The importance of laughter for a Primary School aged audience is part of the key to how we adapt these stories.

The method:

- ◆ Ben, who writes the scripts, takes a story which we think would appeal to audiences
- ◆ He writes a script, using a formulaic structure, (ie. happy ending, villains/sidekicks, love story, some sort of growth as characters, other comedy sequences)
- ◆ He also finds songs that would be appropriate for the story but also well known or recent hits that would entertain and be able to be 'sung along' with.
- ◆ The script should be about 80 pages with 7-11 songs in total
- ◆ Ensure the script has all the elements loved by our audiences:
 - Behind you gag
 - Ohh yes you are / Ohh no you're not gags
 - Lots of questions and answers – audience interaction
 - Somewhere where the audience can do more sophisticated interaction and assistance to the characters
 - Something where we pick on adults as children enjoy this
 - Poo jokes and other low level humour for Primary aged children
 - More sophisticated humour for Year 5 and 6's
 - More sophisticated humour for adults (and possibly older children)
 - Cultural references / local references
 - A love story
 - A part where the audience cheers for a good guy
 - Booing the villain
 - One or two touching moments
 - Any boring bits or slow songs add comedy to, to ensure engagement of all audience

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- Sword fight or some sort of climatic confrontation
- Heightened tension about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way through
- The song "Reach" at the end
- A Happy ending
- The Villain gets what they deserve (children respond positively to justice)
- Ensure there is major growth for the 'heroes' or the characters children will relate to
- Ensure there are subtle 'how to live life in a great way' hints and strategies
- Ensure there is some sort of Values Education that fits in with various school philosophies and various religions (ie. You can Do it Program etc)

Activity:

Discuss the differences in our show, the Disney movie (if you want to mention this, depending on whether your children have seen it), and the myths.

Why did Alpha (and Disney) have to make changes? What was the same? How did the Alpha and Disney versions differ? Critically analyse each and discuss what was great about each. Did Alpha do a good job in adapting the myths into a story that can be used for mythology studies as well as values education/theatre etc?

Younger children: ask them to write down "What was the funniest part?", "Who was the funniest character?". Or if they've seen more than 1 Alpha show, see if they can spot the similarities.

For older children, it's about how we are actually 'allowed' to take a story that everyone knows, find modern elements we can add in, like songs and humour, and then add in valuable messages for the 21st century to give a theatre experience that isn't just about entertainment, or isn't just about telling a story, or isn't just about ramming values education down children's throats.

You can get your students to take a story they know, perhaps a fairytale or a classic book or story, and turn that into a show like this, that is funny and engages young audiences, with cool modern songs etc. How would they have done it differently? Would they have adapted this Alpha Show in a different way? Would they have chosen different songs? Why did we choose such a variety of songs?

Focus on the magical element, of being taken into 'another world' for 90 minutes. What else can do this for us? Songs, books, movies, ballet, live theatre, dance – even just our own imagination. All **expressions of the soul**. Encourage children to immerse themselves in all these other artforms, as they can be just as rewarding in their own special ways.

How does a performance like this prompt us to start to dream again, to imagine what is possible, to live to our full potential?

➔ **Being a Hero**

Learning Area: Values Education

Outcome: To reinforce one of the messages of the show: that we are all capable of being a hero

Information:

The show had many references to how Hercules was not unique, and he was simply an example of what is possible for all of us. Whilst he was strong, that was not what made him a hero. Being a hero is about being who you are, who you REALLY are, and staying true to that. To always telling the truth (real power). To serving others as well as yourself. To live with such impeccable standards that you inspire those around you; not to be famous, but to influence even just your own family and friends.

Activity:

Optional: play inspiring music* and re-read the speech Phil makes to Hercules and the audience:

*examples of inspiring music that would work:

- Theme from the movie "Powder"
- Anything from "Gladiator"
- Anything from "Braveheart"
- Anything from "Contact"
- Theme from "Apollo 13"
- The Launch from "Apollo 13" (really great)
- "Forest Gump Suite"

PHIL

You're not a hero because of your strength; you're a hero because of what you stand for, for honesty, integrity and doing the right thing.

It's not about doing good deeds and worrying about whether you're doing those good deeds for the right reasons or not. It's about what is created beyond yourself because of what you give, what you contribute to the world!

[FORGIVENESS]

Because life is for GIVING! Not for getting! That is true POWER. For Give Ness!

And that's why you have to FOR give Meg. And Meg, you have to forgive that old boyfriend of yours that ran off on you. Only then will you feel like the world, life, the Gods or whatever, aren't PUNISHING you.

If you forgive, you will see the truth, that you aren't being punished, but only being given a message to keep giving your gifts and keep helping the world...and to be a true hero!

[TRUE HERO]

And being a true hero isn't about how strong you are on the outside, is it boys and girls? What do you think being a true hero is about?

(get 1 or 2)

Yeah! Nice one!

[EVERYONE IS A HERO]

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In fact, everyone can be a hero at ANY time. To be a hero, to feel all those feelings of a hero, being all those things the boys and girls were talking about, the first thing you need to do is stand tall! To change how you stand, to stand TALL!

So Hercules, stand tall right now! Come on, that's it, yeah! In fact, all the boys and girls, you're just as much of a hero as he is right? Especially now Hercules doesn't have his super strength anymore.

[STAND]

Will you stand with Hercules, and help him? Will you stand with Hercules and show him how to be a true hero? Alright then boys and girls, stand tall. Stand tall and show Hercules how to stand like a true hero! Plant your feet firmly on the ground and stand tall like a hero.

[HERO STATE]

Now boys and girls, close your eyes, close your eyes, close your eyes and stand tall. Stand tall. Stand like you were the strongest hero on earth! Now Breathe, breathe the way you would breathe if you were the strongest and most powerful hero on earth! See what you would see, hear what you would hear if you were the strongest and most powerful hero on earth! If you feel like a hero Say yes! Say yes! Say yes!

[ANCHOR STATE]

Now squeeze your fist, squeeze your fist as you stand tall, squeeze your fist really really tight with all the confidence and certainty and resilience in the world in your body right now. Squeeze your fist and make the sounds of a true hero GO! Make the sounds of a true hero would make, let me hear them, GO! That's it!

[POWER]

And from this place of certainty and true power, power from truth and forgiveness...power from knowing who you really are and what you were put on this earth for...We can overcome anything. Overcome any challenge.

[FUTURE PACE]

And any time in the future that we face something challenging, all we have to do is remember this moment, remember to stand tall, squeeze our fist and feel the confidence and certainty and feelings of being a true hero come flooding back to make us know we can do anything!

[TEST & CONDITION IT]

Boys and girls, if you know you can be a true hero at any time of your life, say yes! And let's make the sounds of a true hero one more time GO!

[VISUALISE WHAT YOU WANT]

And now boys and girls and Hercules, stand tall with your eyes closed, and imagine yourself, imagine yourself standing up to Hades, or anyone you need to stand up to, or anything you want to overcome in life. Imagine yourself defeating everything Hades is - being mean and evil and deceptive. If you think we can defeat Hades say yes! Say yes! Say yes! And let's make the sounds of a true hero one last time! GO! Awesome, you guys rock

So what do you say? You up for it?

STEP 1:

After this, have the children write/discuss the ways that they are going to serve the world.

1. What they want to **GIVE**...
2. Who they want to **BE**....
3. And what sort of **EMOTIONS** they would need to make themselves **EXPERIENCE** every day in order to do this. (eg. courage, faith, hope, love, confidence, happiness, resilience, determination, peace etc.)

STEP 2:

After they do this, **future pace** the experience for them. Have them think about/talk/write about imagining themselves doing this in the future, how cool it would be, how it would affect everyone around them in a positive way, and all the love and happiness it would bring to themselves and others.

STEP 3:

Finally, link into the story about how Hercules' path was laid out before him, and he had a destiny to fulfil. That his higher purpose was this mission that he accomplished. Create a strong link for your children that we all have a higher purpose and this story was an opening for them to take their first steps in creating this personal destiny, and it is what they are here to do in life.

➔ **Role Models & Performers**

Learning Area: Values Education

Outcome: To be great examples to children and provide an understanding of what were great attributes of the actors that visited and how we can model that into our own lives.

Information:

During Question Time or after the show, the children will have had a chance to talk to the real person behind each character they played. The actors are people who are doing something that they love.

The message is really about how important it is to find something that you love to do and how you can do that to provide value to others and the world.

Finding your purpose in life isn't some magical hard to find unknown that nobody ever gets to, it's simply doing something you love that contributes to yourself and others. As long as whatever you're doing 'right now' (not what you hope to do in the future) is something that does this, then you're living your purpose.

Activity:

Find ways to reinforce the example set by the actors.

Ask questions about the actors themselves (not their characters):

- ◆ How did they stand? How did they hold themselves physically?
- ◆ How did they talk?
- ◆ Were they selfish people or were they very giving people?
- ◆ Did they look like they were having fun?
- ◆ Were they all about themselves (ie. ego driven people)?
- ◆ Do actors in Hollywood etc usually seem a bit ego driven? Were these actors?
 - It takes a special person to be passionate enough to do what our actors do. They don't get fame or fortune from touring to schools, but simply the joy of being with and performing for children and seeing the excitement and love in their eyes after the show.
- ◆ Did you see anything they ate? Was it healthy or unhealthy?
- ◆ Were they drinking lots of water? How important is water to being your best in life?
- ◆ Even when they were doing the 'hard' parts of the job like carrying stuff out to the van, did they still have fun and stay happy and not complain?
- ◆ Do you think you could be like that too?
- ◆ Do you think, even when you have to do something hard or something you don't really want to do, do you think it would make it easier and better if you focussed on how you could have fun whilst doing it? Is this what the actors were focussed on?
- ◆ Do you think the actors were doing their dream job? Living to their full potential?

Find ways to not just use the made-up stories on stage but the real life stories of the actors to reinforce the values of the show, such as living to your full potential, keeping the dream alive etc.

➔ Real vs Fake

Learning Area:

Literacy / Theatre / Values Education

Outcome: To help students understand what was real and what was fake in the show (they are usually obsessed with this); to create an understanding of what is possible in 'theatre'; to encourage truthfulness as a power beyond anything else.

Information:

Children are obsessed with knowing what is real and what is fake. Most questions will revolve around this theme. We believe that it is our nature as humans to be always seeking the truth and children are more in tune with that than most adults. We endeavour to make as much of the show as possible 'real' because children value 'realness' (ie. Truth) very highly.

The second activity is to encourage truthfulness and more 'obsession' with truth (which is a great obsession!). It can be a lot of fun and can also be valuable for learnings around 'peer pressure'. Use the examples of the show and how they valued what we did that was 'real' as an anchor for how important and valued 'truth' is.

Activity: What was Real and what was Fake in the show?

So discuss with your students what is real and what isn't. Here's what is real:

- Yes, they were all really singing (not miming)
- The swords are real
- They really did kiss
- The costumes are real (they were designed & made by our costume designer, Jodie)

What isn't real, or is made-up, pretend etc.

- They aren't really married (they're acting!)
- Megara wasn't really stabbed (obviously, otherwise she would be hurt)
- The sets are pictures (this is how theatre works, plus a 'real' set isn't possible in a touring show)
- The Villain isn't really mean, he or she is acting. The purpose of acting mean on stage is to give the children a great example of what happens when you're a bully/mean/not nice etc...

Activity #2 (continued on next page...)

Activity: An exercise in truth and peer pressure

Take half of your students out of the room. The selection can either be random or you may wish to choose the 'leaders'. Show them an object that has a defining characteristic (ie. Something red, or short etc). Tell them that when we go back in the room, under all circumstances they are to insist that the object is the opposite of what it 'really' is, ie. it's blue, or long.

Rejoin the rest of the class. To avoid the other half of the class feeling 'left out', you may want to have distracted them with another activity first. Now get everyone standing in the middle of the room. Ask (when you say go) for everyone who thinks the object is one way to move to one side of the room, and ask for everyone who thinks the object is the opposite way to move to the other side of the room. You may want to delay saying 'go' so that they talk just for a brief moment to each other about where they're heading. When you say go, observe where people go.

The dilemma for a child (who wasn't in on the preframe) will be to either tell the truth, to succumb to peer pressure, or to be completely confused and stay in the middle of the room! Watch who shows leadership qualities and tells the truth, and notice who will lie in order to remain in rapport with their friends.

Discuss what just happened. Who was willing to lie? Why? Find ways to reinforce the importance of leadership and telling the truth even if it means losing connection with someone that they care for. People become their peer group, and it is vital to an empowering life that people find a peer group that drives them to be 'more', not less. People will do more to stay connected to those they call their friends rather than tell the truth or strive for growth in their lives. The root cause of this is fear (fear of loss of connection with someone) and we can only do our best to condition in children from a young age truth and love as the antidote to fear.

To link back to the show, the children have the same dilemma when they are asked a question by the villain, when they know telling the truth will help the villain. Find out who told the truth even though they didn't like the villain, and who was willing to lie to try to stop him. In the end, did lying help stop the villain? Truth has a power to it and the importance of it should be reinforced as much as possible, even if it seems like it's the 'wrong' thing to do, always choose truth. Truth triumphs over all.

➔ Music and Singing

Learning Area:

Theatre / Music

Outcome: To engage children with regards to the music in the show and create further understanding, appreciation and participation in music and music theatre.

Information:

Alpha shows would NOT be the same without the music we use. Music is an anchor to an emotional state, and can sometimes get the point across quicker than dialogue. Additionally, dancing and movement was used to entertain and structure plot developments. Music and singing is great for character development, we can hear a character's internal dialogue. We try to use the modern songs and pop music in a music theatre style – ie. so it's relevant to the story. Sometimes we also just have comedy songs or music that children are guaranteed to enjoy to engage them right from the start.

Activity

Discuss how singing and music was used in the show to move the story along and develop characters. Then move into a look at how music is used in various styles of theatre and how it creates mood.

Activity: Song analysis

Have a look at the lyrics of the songs we have selected in the show. Whilst they have all been written by others, we use them where they fit, and often the lyrics are quite relevant, and in some cases, we change the lyrics to fit the moment.

We again apologise that we CANNOT supply a CD of the songs due to copyright. We only license the works to be performed live.

Here is a list of the songs in the show*:

Candyman (Christina Aguilera)

Muse

In Da Club (50 cent) – WARNING: offensive lyrics in original

Hades and Weasel

Crank dat (SouljaBoy) – WARNING: offensive lyrics in original

Zeus, Hera, Hermes, Pegasus and Weasel

Ain't That a Kick in the Head (Robbie Williams / Westlife)

Phil, Pegasus and Hercules

YMCA

Phil, Pegasus and Hercules

Hero (Enrique)

Hercules and Megara

ALPHASHOWS – POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES for 'Hercules'

No Good Deed (from Wicked)

Megara / Hercules



Reach (S Club 7)

Everyone

You can, however, listen to all the songs on our website: <http://www.alphashows.com.au>. The music player is on the front page of the website only. We update this as soon as we can, so any new show of the year might not have the songs on there yet.

Download some of the songs and listen to them again and analyse how we have changed some of the lyrics to fit the show. Compare our versions to the originals.

How can we use the lessons found in the songs and other areas of the show to condition new skills, ideals, archetypes and empowering concepts with your children?

You could even have songs playing from the show when you want to create a certain mood in your classroom

*the songs performed is subject to change at any time – we're always updating and changing things.

ALPHASHOWS – **POST-SHOW** ACTIVITIES for 'Hercules'

ADVANCED TOPICS



Learning Area:

Literacy / Values Education

Outcome: To create an advanced understanding for teachers and adults as well as older children who wish to tackle more sophisticated thought and discussion about the show; to participate in advanced activities that have been taken from the world's best in personal development technologies and customised to Alpha Shows, and the children and adults who have experienced an Alpha Show.

Information:

Alpha Shows aren't just silly stories. They have a huge amount of background work and thought gone into the messages and values we want to spread. This section basically will take you through the various advanced topics. It does not have specific activities for each topic, just the information for you to use as you see fit. You may feel overwhelmed with the bulk of information contained here. This section isn't streamlined for a quick 'use this one in class' kind of thing. It's more a 'sit down and absorb for an hour' type of thing, so if you don't have an hour, you probably should skip this section. We think it is interesting reading, however!

Activities: There are a bunch of activities scattered throughout the information. These can be really powerful if you choose to use them.

➔ **Themes in all Alpha Shows**

All Alpha shows contain hidden meanings and subtle themes. They also usually have a focus on the importance of femininity and the power of it and the importance of reintegrating it into our lives. Also a focus is the value of "being who you really are", positive role models, inner beauty, bullying and its consequences, and many other themes. See if you can find themes and symbols and discuss these in class.

➔ **Superman and Jesus similarities**

If you listen closely to Zeus' speeches in our Hercules, you'll notice how he is making obvious references to the story of Jesus (which incidentally, is the same as Jor'el in Superman I and the Richard Donner cut of Superman II). This is not a religious story but the usage of these themes we felt was important as there are many similarities to the Hercules story and the Jesus story. Doing a search on the internet will reveal other stories that follow a similar theme and contain very similar occurrences.

See this website for more information on the parallels to other stories:

http://www.paganizingfaithofyeshua.netfirms.com/parallels_chart.htm

This is only posted for interest's sake, Alpha is not denying or supporting any particular belief or viewpoint. It's just interesting to look at the similarities. We felt it was a nice touch to honour the fact that Hercules is a great story that has been retold many times, and we feel humbled to be able to bring it to the stage for the first time in Australia (that we know of!).

ALPHASHOWS – **POST-SHOW ACTIVITIES** for 'Hercules'

Taken from a website:



Hercules was born from a God (Zeus) and a mortal virgin mother (Alcmene). Similar to Herod who wanted to kill Jesus, Hera wanted to kill Hercules. Like Jesus, Hercules traveled the earth as a mortal helping mankind and performed miraculous deeds. Like Jesus who died and rose to heaven, Hercules died, rose to Mt. Olympus and became a god. Hercules was perhaps the most popular hero in Ancient Greece and Rome. They believed that he actually lived, told stories about him, worshiped him, and dedicated temples to him.

Likewise the 'evidence' of Hercules closely parallels that of Jesus. We have historical people like Hesiod and Plato who mentions Hercules. Similar to the way the gospels tell a narrative story of Jesus, so do we have the epic stories of Homer who depict the life of Hercules. Aesop tells stories and quotes the words of Hercules. Just as we have mention of Jesus in Josephus' Antiquities, so Josephus mentions Hercules in his 'Antiquities' Just as Tacitus mentions a Crestus, he also mentions Hercules many times in his Annals.

Some of Zeus' words in our show, written and cobbled together from other sources.

ZEUS

Well son. Now begins your journey, as I impart my wisdom to you, so that you can serve all of humanity. You will travel far, my little Hercules. You will be different, sometimes you'll feel like an outcast, but you'll never be alone. We will never leave you... the richness of our lives shall be yours. All that I have, all that I've learned, everything I feel... all this, and more... I bequeath you, my son. You will carry me inside you all the days of your life. You will make my strength your own, and see my life through your own eyes, as your life will be seen through mine. The son becomes the father, and the father the son. This is all I can send you, Hercules.

(later, when he meets Hercules as a boy)

My son. All of humanity is on the brink of a new awakening. Your leadership can spur them to action, for the good of all. To do this you had to live as one of them, Hercules, to discover where your strength and your power are needed. Always hold in your heart the pride of your special heritage. They can be a great people, Hercules, if they wish to be. They only lack the light to show the way. For this reason above all, their capacity for good, I have sent them you... my only son.

Indeed, the idea of a god sending his only son to earth is a powerful image. Jesus says in the bible "All this you shall do, and more" when people are amazed by his miracles. Our show of Hercules strives to create this vision for the audience. That Hercules (Jesus/Superman) is a leader, someone who has come to earth as someone special to lead the way and show us the light. And the ultimate message is that we are all capable of being this and must hear the call to step up and become just as much of a hero. Notwithstanding the controversial nature of all these stories being similar to the story/historical record of Jesus, our main outcome is not to spur confrontational discussion about these things, but to inspire us all to be more and to give more to the world following the example set by these heroes!

➔ Hades

You know, Hades is a most wonderful character in Greek mythology. We were slightly disappointed to have to follow Disney's example of demonizing him. Therefore we encourage discussion about Hades and what his role was in the Underworld. That it isn't so black and white. Unfortunately, in a dramatic context, we need a villain, so Hades was it. Our view was that perhaps the "Lord of the Underworld" was a job and a very important one, as Zeus says so towards the end of our show, when he places Weasel – Hades sidekick – in charge of the Underworld and promotes him to the "Lord"! Perhaps Weasel will be the new Hades that the myths speak of!

Suffice it to say, it may be worthwhile discussing the character of Hades in more depth.

➔ Hera

Hera was pretty nasty in the myths. She tried to kill Hercules, poison him with snakes etc. We skipped all of this. She wasn't even Hercules' mother. Zeus impregnated an earthly woman, in actuality. We skipped this part too as it just became too complicated (we did try in some drafts of the scripts however, and Hera was going to play a larger role in Hercules' fall to earth). In the end, we decided that the theme of Zeus *sending* Hercules to earth (rather than being stolen) was more powerful and more in line with the message we were aiming for.

However, you can also look at this complicated character and discuss the myths. We mainly gloss over anything that would contradict the myths and it could be assumed that Hercules was born from an earthly woman.

➔ Megara's beliefs about men

To continue on from the earlier points about Megara, it is interesting to note the sophistication of this character, even for an Alpha show. She could represent many women today, who have been told or experienced that they can't trust men. She sings a song "I don't need a man" and it is obvious of what is going on. Her personal growth comes from realising that whatever you believe about something, you're right! In that, if you believe men are not trustworthy, then you'll only ever attract and find men who are non-trustworthy. Transformation and transcendence comes not from 'finding a man' who is not like this (where are all the good men? The man drought that people love to claim exists etc), but instead changing within, your own beliefs, which will ultimately change what is attracted into your life. Megara even thought Hercules was like this in the beginning and it was not until something terrible happens that she finally sees the truth and starts to act with courage and integrity (rather than being manipulative and even going so far as to help Hades). There is a powerful message in this character, to transform our own limiting beliefs and find the truth and good in all people, and ultimately forgive those that have harmed us. The past does not equal the future! So we must free ourselves from the past and forgive, always, forgive.

Life is for giving not for getting

For more discussion topics, see the Discussions section earlier in this guide

What other positive values could be reinforced? We look forward to hearing how this discussion goes!