

Quick Skits - 1.

Article #16a.

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Skits Cut Outs

Pages 135 & 136, The Leader, March 1987

Canned Skits

A good way to stimulate skit-making skills is to provide the actors some starting points. When young people have not had much experience at creating original skits, it helps if they can start with a setting, situation, and character.

Prepare three cans or paper bags filled with cards or slips of paper. One can will offer different settings, the second a variety of situations, and the third a selection of characters. Skit teams draw one card each from the first two cans and enough cards from the third can to give each player a character.

Once your bunch are more experienced at creating skits, try some of these other ideas.

-Fill a bag with punch lines (e.g. They told me there'd be days like this... I knew I should have minded my own business... But it seemed like a nice little pussycat... etc.). Challenge teams to create a skit leading up to the punch line they draw.

-Fill a bag with fairy tale or nursery rhyme titles. Challenge teams to create skits that give the story a surprise ending.

-Challenge teams to act out a situation using only nonsense words (gobbledygook) or only numbers. How about a skit using sounds only?

-Fill a bag with situations: e.g. shopping at the supermarket; rearranging the furniture in a room; giving the dog a bath; etc. Challenge teams to act out the situations with no props (i.e. using people as doors, typewriters, lamps, etc.).

-Give each team one item; e.g. a hat, scarf, pair of shoes. Challenge them to create a skit using that item.

-Fill a bag with a list of song titles. Challenge teams to mime the song (tell its story in movement only - no words).

Quick Skit

Announcer: Ladies and Gentlemen: Professor X will now give his address.

Professor: Ladies and Gentlemen. My address is 498 Maple Street.

(Professor bows; announcer and professor exit)

Measurement Problem

(Two Scouts come on stage carrying a long pole. They prop it up, then stand back and look at it.)

Scout 1: Now, there are several ways we can figure out the height of this pole. How do you want to start?

(The Scouts unsuccessfully try various methods of estimation to calculate the height of the pole. The conversation goes something like....)

Scout 1: According to my calculations, that pole is about 2 m high.

Scout 2: There's no way. It has got to be shorter than that. Just look at it.

(This kind of exchange repeats several times as the Scouts obviously become more and more exasperated. A Cub strolls onto the stage.)

Cub: Hi! (he watches a bit) What are you guys trying to do?

Scout 2: We're trying to measure the exact height of this pole.

Scout 1: We haven't had too much luck, yet, but we'll get it.

Cub: Why don't you just lay the pole on the ground and measure its length?

Scout 1: (scornfully) Cubs!

Scout 2: I'll say. (To the Cub) Didn't you hear right? We want to know how tall the pole is - not how long it is!

Quick Skits - 2.
Article #16b.

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Skits Cut-outs

Pages 143 and 144, The Leader, May 1989

Those Wonderful Machines

For the first two skits, decorate cardboard boxes as futuristic machines with lots of dials, cranks, buttons and, if you're really ambitious flashing lights. Include sound effects people, too, to "turn on" the machines on cue.

The Growing Machine: The cardboard box needs to be large enough to hold one of the players and various props. "Load" it and push it on stage, where a narrator explains that this marvellous machine has been invented by tonight's guest, Professor..., who will demonstrate its tremendous powers. He introduces the professor, who enters carrying a bag of his props.

The professor explains he has invented a wonderful machine that makes things grow. He proceeds to demonstrate. He pulls a small piece of paper from his sack, pushes buttons, etc., and throws in the piece of paper (sound effects, flashing lights). The player inside throws out a paperback book. The demonstration continues with small ball in, large ball out; piece of string in, hunk of rope out; etc. Finally, the professor throws in a baby doll. The player inside jumps out in baby clothes, cries "Daddy!", and chases him off stage.

The Hair Cut Machine: The cardboard box needs to be large enough for a player to poke in his head. Face the opening away from the audience. Set up a striped pole and use a few other barbershop props. The "customer" wears a tight fitting light-coloured bathing cap to hide his hair and, over the cap, a long scraggly wig loose-fitting enough that he can shake it off when he needs to but well enough anchored that it won't fly off too early.

Barber is on stage. Customer enters and asks for a hair cut. Barber checks him out, announces he thinks this is a job for his brand new haircut machine, and convinces the customer to try it. Customer sticks his head into the back of the box and barber turns it on (sound effects). Customer yells, flails, flops and goes through incredible contortions, shaking off the wig in the process. Barber, unperturbed, turns off the machine. Customer pulls out "bald" head and races screaming off stage.

Is it Time Yet? Six to 10 players sit in a line facing the audience, legs stretched out in front of them, left leg crossed over right at the ankle. The player at one end of the line asks the one beside him, "Is it time yet?" The question passes from person to person down the line. The last player looks at his

watch and tells the person beside him, "No, not yet". The reply passes from player to player back up the line to the first person. Players send question and answer up and down the line three or four times, each time becoming more impatient and fidgety. Finally, the end player replies, "Yes, it's time now." The news passes from one to another up the line to the first player who says, "Oh, thank goodness! ". At this point, all the players uncross their legs and re-cross them right over left.

A Quiet Day: One player stands with his ear to a fence (an old painted sheet will work) as if listening intently. Several others enter to watch. One of them asks, "What do you hear?"

"Listen!" he says dramatically. They all listen, look puzzled. Another says, "I don't hear anything. "

"Listen!" first player says again. The routine repeats once or twice more. Finally, one player says with great disgust, "I don't hear anything!"

"Funny," says the first player, "it's been like that all day!"
Players exit.

Quick Skits - 3.
Article #16c.

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Skits Cut-outs

Pages 145 & 146, The Leader, January 1990

Successful Fisherman

Five or six fishermen sit on the end of the dock (chairs), casting and winding in their lines. One fisherman is catching all the fish: the others have no luck. In turn, the unlucky ones ask the successful fisherman why he's doing so well. Each time, he mumbles a reply without opening his mouth, and nobody can tell what he is saying. When the last person asks the question, the successful fisherman sighs, spits into his hand, and says, "You have to keep the worms warm."
--from Akela Walt Vandekieft, 1st Port Wallace Cubs, Dartmouth, N.S.

Quickie

You need two characters, one on stage and the other to rush on in a panic, swatting the air, looking desperate and yelling, "It's all around me, it's all around me!"

"What? What's all around you?" the first player asks. The other replies, "My belt, of course!"

Skits on the Seashore

Young and old enjoy roaming the seashore to pick up seashells, seaweed, driftwood, bits of fishing gear, bird feathers, polished stones, and many other things carried in with the tides and storms. You may even find objects from different countries, continents, or times. On a beach, it's easy to imagine far off places and events.

Imagine a troop sitting around a fire on the beach. Suddenly, a kelp-shrouded mummie appears, or an Indian Chief with seashell necklace and belt, seabird feather headdress, and driftwood tomahawk with a perfect stone head lashed to it with a piece of root. Or perhaps they hear a deep gruff voice and see Long John Silver before them with driftwood leg, crutch, and sword. He waves the sword, shouts, and shakes his seaweed covered head to reveal a kelp patch over one eye...

Skits inspired by and put together with simple items found on the seashore are fun for both Scouts and Scouters. Give the idea a try.
--Troop Scouter Rick Cook, 1st Mananook Scouts, Grand Manan, N.B.

In the Furniture Store

You need a furniture store salesman and a customer who knows what is happening. Before the salesman can sell anything, he needs stock. Call for volunteers from the audience: four to lie down to make the rug; three to crouch as the couch; one

or two chairs; a lamp; and most important, one good natured fellow to get down on all fours as the coffee table. When all are ready, a customer enters and asks to see a couch. The salesman shows him the furniture, extolling its high quality and low price. He pays particular attention to the coffee table: beautiful, sturdy, mark and mar-proof, etc.

The customer shows some interest. The salesman pats and wiggles the coffee table to show how firm and steady it is, then picks up a cup (empty) and says something like, "See this cup of water? Pretend it's coffee. When it sits on this table, you know it will never spill!" He places the cup between the shoulder blades of the coffee table and jiggles it gently. "See!" The customer says he'll think about it and leaves. The dejected salesman dismisses all the furniture except the coffee table and leaves. The coffee table tries to figure out how he will get up without spilling what he thinks is a cup of water all over himself. Cheer him on!