

## Drama activities for Constable and Toop

### Week 1

#### Ghostly goings on

Explain that these sessions will focus on building acting skills whilst exploring some of the themes that arise in the book *Constable and Toop* by Gareth P. Jones (one of the book from this year's Book Award)

- Warm Up – 5 minutes – variation on sleeping lions

Tell the pupils ... *In the book, the main character Sam works at Constable and Toop's funeral parlour. One night, Sam's criminal uncle Jack bangs on the door, hoping for somewhere to hide from the police. However the police inspector arrives before he can hide, so Jack must lie in a coffin and pretend to be dead until the inspector leaves... but the inspector comes very close!*

Tell the pupils to imagine that they are Jack and that they too must lie on the floor and pretend to be dead, while the inspector (one of the drama leaders) tries to prove that they are alive. If anyone moves they will be arrested (out).

Remind pupils that this game is all about concentration and maintaining their role regardless of any distractions.

- Main activity – 10-15 minutes

*In the book, we are introduced to a ghost called Lapsewood, who has been dead for many years and now enjoys his job as an office clerk at the Ghost Bureau. However, after several ghosts in Victorian London start to disappear from their haunted houses, he is sent back to the 'physical world' to investigate.*

Split the girls into groups of 4-5. Tell them that you are going to read the extract where Lapsewood reappears in the physical world. Their job is to recreate the scene and show what they think happens next. (note: some will have read the book but encourage them to be creative!)

**\*I recommend that one leader introduces each activity and that you all help the groups whilst they are creating their scenes. Your job is to offer ideas and to keep them from arguing and wasting time. Try to ensure that everyone has a fair say and that no one is left out. I recommend that any available leaders work with the younger members of the group to give them confidence. Join in if you think it will help.\***

- End – 10 minutes

Encourage each group to perform their scenes. Be positive and supportive when giving feedback.

# Extract: Lapsewood's return to the physical world...

Read the following extract from the story:

Entering the physical world was a shock. Lapsewood felt things he hadn't felt in decades, yet the elements had no effect upon him and the cold, wind and drizzle passed through him as though he were nothing.

Hazy lamplights and fires burned within the dense fog that hung over London. Lapsewood drifted down with the raindrops and wondered how much his fellow spirits were responsible for the thick fog enveloping the city and how much it was the winter fuel, burnt to battle the biting cold of the night.

He rematerialized in a cobbled backstreet. He rubbed his temples to rid himself of the spinning sensation in his head. He had picked a quiet street, hoping to have a moment to gather his thoughts but, as he stood gazing into the blackened brickwork that surrounded him, two men stumbled through him, giving him a brief but disturbing glimpse of the inside of one of their heads. Both men reeked of alcohol.

## Week 2 – Exorcism

- Warm Up – 5 minutes – variation of Splat

Get the pupils into a circle ready to play the well known game 'splat' However this week is all about exorcism, so the person in the middle must shout 'ghost' while the two on either side of the ghost shout 'splat'.

- Main activity - 15 minutes

As you know from last week, Lapsewood has been sent to the physical world to find out why ghosts have been disappearing from their haunted houses. It turns out that people don't really like sharing their homes with ghosts, and so they have been hiring an exorcist to banish the spirits away.

In groups of 4-5 it is your job to create a striking piece of drama to present what you imagine to be the exorcism ceremony.

Think about:

- the people who might be present (the exorcist, the family, the ghost)
- the words that would be said any movements that might be required
- the pace of the ceremony (how will you build up tension to the point of climax? how will it end?)
- using dramatic techniques such as changing volume, rhyme, chanting, movement

The aim is to make the performance powerful and striking for the audience by incorporating a range of dramatic techniques

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- End – 10 minutes  
Encourage each group to perform their scenes. Be positive and supportive when giving feedback.

