

# The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Northamptonshire

## Support Materials



## Dramatic Conventions – A Glossary



**Action narration:** a stylised convention which requires each participant to pause and verbalise motives and descriptions of actions before they undertake them in an improvisation.

**Communal voice:** the group operates as commentator on the action while speaking from the same perspective, or individuals speak the words of one of the characters in the drama.

**Communal writing:** similar to 'communal voice', but the contributions from the group are written down to be considered at a later time.

**Conscience alley:** a group divided into two lines faces each other. A pupil (or teacher) in role as a character in the drama walks between the two lines as individuals speak out what is in the character's conscience. This may be set up so that one line represents the positive aspects of the character's dilemma and the other line, the negative.

**Flashback:** replay of important sections to allow for group scrutiny. Can be done in real time, slow motion or as a series of tableaux.

**Forum theatre:** action by an individual or small group enacted in front of the whole group. Ownership of the action is shared by all, thereby encouraging intervention, pausing, suggestion, replay and commentary.

**Freeze-frame / marking the moment / tableau:** small group 'freezing' of a significant moment to allow for group observation and analysis.

**Guided tour:** in pairs, A (with eyes open) leads B (with eyes closed) slowly through an imaginary environment, providing a spoken commentary. The environment or location may be based on text but will usually be stimulated by a printed or projected pictorial map or picture. Roles can be reversed to enable parity of experience.

**Hot-seating:** placing one person in role under scrutiny, usually done by seating the individual and directing questions at her/him from the group.

**Improvised drama:** encouraging participants to openly explore an issue or situation through the perspective of their adopted roles.

**Mantle of the expert:** an individual or group of characters are imbued with specialist knowledge about a subject. This allows them to speak with 'authority' to the rest of the group.

**Mime:** movement without words depicting and often replaying a significant moment.

**Ritual:** a stylised enactment of moments of high social and cultural significance, e.g. initiation into a faith.

**Role on the wall:** a useful 'communal' method of building a role as a group. Ideas are collected from the group and progressively displayed – usually done with sugar paper and sticky notes as a 'work in progress' document.

**Role reversal:** a technique of encouraging participants to swap roles so that different perspectives can be experienced and considered from within the drama.

**Scripted drama:** using written text to shape the structure of the piece.

**Sculpting:** participants offer suggestions to place an individual in a significant, frozen position so that considered analysis can be made.

**Small group playmaking:** small groups of participants plan and present pieces of drama that explore the issues and context of the work.

**Teacher in role:** a crucial technique whereby the group leader adopts a role (which could be central to the drama) that offers a model of appropriate language and behaviour. Sometimes the teacher will deliberately choose a low status role to offer an alternative perspective.

**Thought-tracking / tapping:** giving those in role the opportunity to voice their inner thoughts and feelings by stopping the action and making explicit distinction between their inner thoughts and outer utterances.

**Time tunnel:** the drama is set up in the context of time travellers. Chairs are arranged in a circle. Teacher explains that the class will take the role of time travellers and that while they sit in the circle they are in the present day and that anything that takes place in the centre is taking place in the time tunnel and therefore in the past or future. The central area is the tunnel through which images of other times can be viewed. Teacher should explain that s/he will speak as Time Traveller when inside the circle of chairs and as teacher when outside.

**Warm-ups:** structured playful activities designed to forge a dynamic within the group. Often contains a 'serious' link with the work to follow.

**Writing in role:** a technique where participants write from the point of view of one of the roles. This enables different perspectives and viewpoints to be explored in greater depth.

