

# The Giver

## *Theatre Arts-Integration Lesson Plan*

**Content:** Lois Lowry's *The Giver* Theatre Residency Lesson Plan

**Focus:** Explore *The Giver*'s themes of community verses individual and the importance of memory through scenes and monologues

**Standards:** RL.6.4, L.6.5; SL.6.1; W.6.3D; 6.TH:Cr1 b; 6.TH:Pr6; 6.TH:Pr4 b; 6.TH:Cn10; 6.TH:Cn11.1

**Grade:** 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Class Layout:** One week of five 50-minute lessons

## ***Lesson 1 of 5***

**Focus:** Exploring what it takes to create a perfect community and where it could go wrong

**Standards:** SL.6.1, 6.TH:Cn11.1

**Materials/Preset:** White Paper, Note Paper, Pencils, Coloring Supplies

**Warm Up (10):** Name and gesture, Game – Bibbity Bibbity Bop (to split class into groups of four to five)

**Focus (5):** Discuss as a class the qualities of The Community in *The Giver*. What values did The Community hold? What was the ideal citizen/population? What did it take to create that ideal?

**Activity 1 (10):** Groups brainstorm their version of an ideal community. They must decide on what the mission of the community and what they gave up achieving that goal. They must also (at least) three positive qualities of the community, three negative qualities of the community, and three qualities of an ideal citizen.

**Activity 2 (20):** Group create brochures for their new community, advertising what is great about it. It should be colorful and include the information from the first activity.

**Clean-up/Closing Circle (5):** Shout outs and closing ritual.

## ***Lesson 2 of 5***

**Focus:** Creating scenes based on the rules of the community

**Standards:** W.6.3D, 6.TH:Cr1 b, 6.TH:Cn10

**Materials/Presets:** Lined Paper, pencils

**Warm Up (5):** Game - What are you doing?

**Focus (10):** Gather together for a class discussion. What did Jonas begin to question after he became the receiver? Did he accomplish getting others to question the ways of the Community? In our own communities and society, what could happen if someone questions the standard practices of a group or organization? Is there a reward for being a model citizen?

**Activity 1 (12):** Split off into the groups from the previous class. Groups work together to create a script for a scene of someone following the rules of the Community created yesterday. What standard are they upholding? How are they treated by the Community? Are they rewarded in some way for their actions? Everyone must speak at least once. The Sameness Community in *The Giver* is very concerned with specific language choices, so all dialogue must be very specific and clear in meaning.

**Rehearsal 1 (3):** Practice the above scene, on its feet, as many times as possible.

**Activity 2 (12):** In the same groups, work together to create a script for a scene of someone questioning the Community created yesterday. What is this person pushing back against? Do others agree? Is this person punished in some way? Is this aspect of the community changed in any way? Everyone must speak at least once. The Sameness Community in *The Giver* is very concerned with specific language choices, so all dialogue must be very specific and clear in meaning.

**Rehearsal 2 (3):** Practice the above scene, on its feet, as many times as possible.

**Clean-up/Closing Circle (5):** Shout outs and closing ritual.

## ***Lesson 3 of 5***

**Focus:** Creating a sensory-based monologue based on memories.

**Standards:** RL.6.4, L.6.5

**Materials/Preset:** Pencils, Lined Paper, Guided Meditation Sheet

**Warm Up (10):** Game - Just a Minute

**Focus (5):** Have everyone travel back to their desks for a group discussion. What does Jonas experience when the Giver shares memories with him? How do we share memories with each other? To have a clear memory, what sensory details do we focus on? Has anyone had a memory strongly tied to a sensory experience?

**Activity 1 (10):** Announce that we are all going to be documenting happy memories from elementary school. They will be writing monologues about this happy memory, like they are telling a friend about the event. It should be in first person: 'I,' 'My', and 'Me.' Prepare them to focus on the sensory details: sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch. Have the students close their eyes and listen to the guided meditation the TA leads. This is a silent activity.

**Activity 2 (10):** Silently have the students pull out a piece of paper and pencil to write with. Give them five minutes to free-write silently. Their pencils shouldn't leave the page and they should continue to write whatever comes to their head. After five minutes, give them another five to edit. Everyone should write at least five lines.

**Activity 3 (10):** Move the students back into their groups. Have them share their monologues with the small group. Have them decide two memories to "give away" – hand to the TA to be given to another group the next day – and one to "release" themselves – to be performed themselves on Friday. Collect the "given" memories.

**Clean-up/Closing Circle (5):** Shout outs and closing ritual.

## ***Lesson 4 of 5***

**Focus:** Interpreting prewritten text as your own and preparing for performances

**Standards:** RL.6.4, L.6.5

**Materials/Preset:** Memory Monologues, Scripts, Brochures

**Warm Up (5):** Game - What are you doing?

**Focus (5):** Gather together for a class discussion. How do we make a piece of text come alive? How can we convey tone? How can we use our voices and bodies to make it interesting for an audience?

**Activity 1 (10):** Have everyone get into their groups. Pass out the “given” memory monologues to new groups (now they are “received”). Have each group decided on two people to present these monologues. Have them practice each monologue at least five times. The others in the group are directors that give notes to make the text come alive.

**Activity 2 (25):** The groups rehearse all their pieces in order: the brochure for their community, the scene following the rules, the scene questioning the rules, the personal memory, and the two received memories. Keep a tally on the board of how many complete runs a group does.

**Clean-up/Closing Circle (5):** Shout outs and closing ritual.

## ***Lesson 5 of 5***

**Focus:** Performances

**Standards:** 6.TH:Pr6; 6.TH:Pr4 b

**Materials/Preset:** Scripts, Monologues, Brochure, pencils, line paper

**Warm Up (10):** Break into groups and rehearse through the material as many times as possible

**Performance (30):** While not performing, students are taking notes on the performances. For each performance they write positives they see in one column and questions they have in another.

**Activity 1 (5):** Fill out evaluation forms.

**Clean-up/Closing Circle (5):** Shout outs and closing ritual.

## ***Guided Meditation***

Close your eyes.

First, relax your body. Starting at the top of your head, allow a feeling of relaxation to begin. Feel the relaxation grow with each breath you take.

Inhale... Relax your scalp and head.... exhale.... Let the tension go away even more.... Breathe in relaxation.... Feeling your face and ears relax... exhale all the tension. Inhale.... Feeling your neck and shoulders relaxing.... As you exhale, let all the muscles of your neck and shoulders release their hold, relaxing fully....

Breathe in, feeling the relaxation continuing to your arms and hands... Breathe out the tension.... Breathe in relaxation.... Allowing your chest and upper back to relax.... release the tension as you exhale. Inhale, feeling the relaxation flowing through your middle back and your stomach.... Release the muscles of your back and stomach as you breathe out.... As you take another breath, feel your lower back relaxing. Feel the tension leaving as you release the breath.

As you inhale, feel your upper legs relaxing... Let the muscles of your legs completely let go as you breathe out. Take another breath drawing in relaxation, all the way down to your feet. Let your legs go limp as you exhale. Continue to breathe in relaxation and breathe out tension. Now you are feeling deeply relaxed. Deeply relaxed and calm...

Begin to create a picture in your mind. Imagine that you are floating on a soft, fluffy white cloud. Feel the surface beneath you becoming softer... more cloud-like... Feel the cloud rising out of the surface you are on, surrounding you in its protective support... soon you are floating on just the cloud... Let it rise a little further, taking you with it.... see the walls and ceiling around you disappearing as you float into the sunny sky.... Drifting on the cloud. Feel the cloud beneath you. It is soft but supportive. Feel the cloud supporting your whole body. Notice each place where your body is touching the cloud. Feel how soft and comfortable the cloud is. It is almost like floating in the air.

Begin to recall the memory from your childhood. A happy, blissful one. Be in the memory as fully as possible. Use all your senses. Imagine what you look like in the memory. How does your body feel? What is your mind focusing on? Bring in whatever smells, textures and sounds that fill in the experience. Now get a panoramic view, taking everything into yourself as if it was happening for the first time. This is your experience. Right now. You are feeling whatever it is

you want to feel. Now meditate on this feeling. Let it take over your body and your mind completely. If your mind wanders, gently bring your focus back to the feeling that you've chosen to focus on.

Now it is time to return to your day. Notice now your surroundings. Gradually come back to the present. Feel the surface beneath you. Hear the sounds around you. Become more and more aware and alert. Continue to rest for a few moments longer, but open your eyes and look around. See your surroundings.

Wiggle your fingers and toes, feeling your body reawaken. Shrug your shoulders. Move your arms and legs. Turn your head. When you are ready, you can return to your day, feeling refreshed and alert after your journey floating on a cloud.