

13.

Stolen – Scene analysis (Group 4)

Activity sheet

In this exercise, you have the opportunity to explore the issues raised in *Bringing them home* by performing excerpts from a 1998 play, *Stolen*. Working in groups, you will develop your own production of these pieces. The aim is not so much an accurate representation of the scenes, but to explore how performance can be used to understand a social issue.

Throughout this exercise, you are encouraged to draw on what you have learned about the removal of Indigenous children from the material in this unit and bring that to your discussions and performance.

1. Reading

Read the following scenes. The background gives you some information about how these scenes work within the rest of the play.

Scenes

- 'Line-Up 1' – pages 5–6
- 'Line-Up 2' – page 13
- 'Line-Up Age Twelve' – page 17
- 'Line-Up 3' – page 20

Background

The 'Line-Up' scenes bring all of the characters together on the stage. These scenes show the common experiences of the children and also how they are affected in different ways. By bringing the characters together, the audience learns about the range of impacts that 'being stolen' has had on the individuals.

'Line-Up 1' shows the children arranging themselves by skin colour from lightest to darkest. 'Line-Up 2' involves the children being evaluated one by one. Jimmy sells himself by saying 'I'm a real good boy!'

The issue of being chosen for domestic service is shown in 'Line-up Age Twelve'. It portrays Ruby being selected for domestic service.

'Line-Up 3' shows the children lining up to be chosen for a weekend away with a white family.

Characters

- Jimmy, Sandy, Ruby, Shirley, Anne in each scene

2. Discussing

In your groups, start discussing how you might perform these scenes. Consider the following production elements:

- Characterisation
- Staging (How would you use lighting? What props do you need?)
- Performance (What actions will reveal something about the issue?)
- Tone of voice

Here are some discussion questions to guide you.

- What does the first line-up scene say about the way Indigenous people were labeled by government authorities and other officials?
- What does the scene showing Ruby being selected for domestic service suggest about the rights of children who were put into domestic service?

- What are the different emotional responses of the children to the experience of being judged by officials?
- What is the common experience that each of the children go through in the line-up scenes?
- Are some children affected emotionally more or less by each line-up?
- What is the range of responses from the children?
- What government policies are referred to in the different line-up scenes?
- Can you think of any similarities between these scenes and the stories about being taken away in the Inquiry?

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3. Developing

Now you can develop some of the ideas that came out of your discussion and see how they will work in performance. Your group will present these scenes to the class, so the next stage is rehearsal.

- Amongst yourselves, decide who will play which part. If there are more people in your group than characters, you may want to rehearse it a couple of times with different people playing different characters. Alternatively, you may be able to think of other ways to incorporate the extra people into the scenes.
- Run through the script once by just reading lines.
- Start preparing the scenes as they will be performed. Use your discussion time to make decisions about movement, props etc.
- Obviously, you will not be introducing lighting or sound into your performance, but it is a good idea to think about how you would use these if you could.

4. Performing

Each group will present their scenes to the class.

Each performance will be followed by a discussion of the performance and what elements of the issue were brought out. Feedback on further work and development can also be provided.