

13.

Stolen – Scene analysis (Group 5)

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.

- 'Unspoken Abuse 1' – page 8
- 'Unspoken Abuse 2' – page 15
- 'Unspoken Abuse 3' – page 23

Background

There are three of these scenes through the play. Each of them connects with the scenes called 'Line-Up'. Basically, in the Line-Up scenes, the children form a line and one is selected to be taken to a non-Indigenous home for a weekend visit.

In these scenes, the child returns. Ruby returns in 'Unspoken Abuse 1' and 'Unspoken Abuse 2'. Jimmy returns in the third scene.

Characters

- Jimmy, Ruby, Anne, Sandy, children (5 upwards)
- Jimmy, Ruby, Anne, Shirley, children (5 upwards)
- Jimmy, Ruby, Shirley, children (4 upwards)

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.

- Why are these scenes called 'Unspoken Abuse'?
- What is the purpose of these scenes and how do they relate to the 'Line-Up' scenes?
- What do these scenes have in common? What are their differences?
- What difference do you notice between the children's responses and answers in each scene?
- Why do you think the children are chanting?
- Why do they stop chanting?
- What is the effect of not saying what happened to Ruby and Jimmy?
- What do you make of Jimmy's response, 'Oh Ruby!', in the first two scenes?
- What emotions or feelings do each of the scenes evoke?

- What staging techniques (for example, lighting) would you use to change the scenes? Why would you do this?
- Write down some action words found in the scenes that express how Ruby and Jimmy feel. Drawing on what you know about the removal of Indigenous children, think of some more action words. Ask yourself: How would Ruby and Jimmy express their feelings physically?

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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.