



Drama: Drama and Others

What if drama were about others and not self?

Alison's class loved playing "Jellybean and Chocolate" in drama. For this game, the class forms a tight circle with two students, blindfolded, inside the circle. One is called Jellybean, and the other is called Chocolate. Jellybean has to find Chocolate by calling out, "Where are you, Chocolate?" Chocolate then has to answer, "Here I am!" Chocolate can move and try to evade Jellybean. The rest of the circle tries to protect Chocolate without touching Jellybean.

"At the end of the game, we all sat on the floor in a circle. I asked the students to undertake the usual evaluative and reflective activities: *What I liked doing*; *I felt confident when*; etc. I asked the student who had played the part of Jellybean about what she had enjoyed about the activity, and she replied, 'Nothing. I felt like I couldn't win.' I probed a little deeper. She said that it felt as though the rest of the class had been ganging up on her.

"It was good for the rest of the class to hear the honesty of this girl, as it helped them to see that drama can be fun for some, but the roles some people are asked to play can be challenging and out of their comfort zone. Drama makes us think.

"This made us all rethink, and we added new statements to our set of criteria on the evaluation sheet for the activity that helped us be aware of how others were feeling, and not just concentrate on our own response. We also added a statement concerning how drama challenged us.

- _____(name of activity) can be a little_____(scary, challenging, fun, etc.).
- I think others might have found it_____(scary, challenging, fun, etc.).
- People playing the role of_____were really_____.
- Today's drama lesson made me think because_____."

What's going on here?

Alison saw her drama lesson as a time for thinking about others, not just oneself, and as an opportunity for empathy.

She engaged learners in focusing on a new emphasis in her evaluation and in rethinking the criteria involved (changing the criteria and involving students in this). She helped them to focus outward and reflect with empathy on others' experiences during the activity.

She reshaped her practice by using questions and time for reflection to change the focus from self to others, and by giving this a concrete outcome in new written criteria.

What does this have to do with faith, hope, and love?

Love is not a static virtue but a movement from self to others and God. Life is a continual process of taking yourself from the center of life and moving God and others into the position that your self naturally takes. Doing this requires faith, as we wonder whether others will look after us if we don't put ourselves first. Love is not just a feeling but a choice, an act of will to behave in a particular way. The Bible talks about putting on love like putting on a garment. Like a pair of pants that are too large, we can grow into it. The first step on this pathway of love is seeing others and their value in God's eyes, and knowing that we have to put their needs before our own.

What difference does it make?

By changing the evaluation just a little, Alison helped to make her class aware of others and take the focus off their own feelings and achievements. Few changes were involved, but it could make a difference to how all the students approach drama.

Where could we go from here?

This approach can be used with older students with a reworking of the evaluative comments to an age-appropriate level. There are many other applications for this type of thinking, such as group work in any subject area.

Digging deeper

In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul describes love as “not self seeking” ([1 Corinthians 13:4-5](#)). This does not mean self is wiped out or personal needs are never met. Jesus talked of [loving others](#) as we love ourselves. Selfishness often arises from insecurity and viewing experiences such as love as finite commodities, as if there is only so much to go around (“If you get love, praise, etc., will there be enough for me?”). In a situation like that, people look out for number one. But Jesus taught radical selflessness. He ranked loving others as second only to loving God ([Mark 12:28-31](#)) and told people to treat others as they wanted to be treated ([Luke 6:31](#)).

Selfishness is the making a man's self his own center, the beginning, and end of all he does. John Owen

Choosing to be unselfish is to go against the grain. Jesus talked in terms of dying to self and living to God and others. This dying to self is something that happens with the help of the Holy Spirit. It is not a one-time act but a daily process. Self is not lost in the process; it is strengthened. Christians often discover that there is a strange inversion at work: in focusing on God and others we find ourselves ([Matthew 16:25](#)).

Selfishness is the result of humanity's choice of self over God and others that leads to the sin that warps our world. However we understand Genesis 3 and Adam and Eve's decision to go their own way, the reality is that we have shifted the focus onto our wants and needs.

